



Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Problem Reports

2019

Emily Dickinson's Echology: A Listener's Reconceptualization of Citizenship, Consciousness, and the World

Beth Ann Staley

West Virginia University, bstaley@mix.wvu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/etd>

 Part of the [Literature in English, North America Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Staley, Beth Ann, "Emily Dickinson's Echology: A Listener's Reconceptualization of Citizenship, Consciousness, and the World" (2019). *Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Problem Reports*. 4041.

<https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/etd/4041>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by The Research Repository @ WVU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Problem Reports by an authorized administrator of The Research Repository @ WVU. For more information, please contact ian.harmon@mail.wvu.edu.

Emily Dickinson's Echology: A Listener's Reconceptualization of Citizenship, Consciousness,
and the World

Beth Staley

Dissertation submitted to the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences at West Virginia University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in
English

Timothy Sweet, Ph. D., Chair
Katy Ryan, Ph.D.
Dennis Allen, Ph.D.
Lara Farina, Ph.D.
Marta Werner, Ph.D.

Department of English

Morgantown, West Virginia
2019

Keywords: Emily Dickinson, Poetry, Lyric, Sound, American Literature, Echo, Ecology,
Echology, Listener, Listening, Speaker, Speaking, Citizenship, Consciousness, World,
Environment, Nature, Human Nature, Earth, Air, Sea, Fire, Elements, 19th Century, Voice, Being

Copyright 2019 Beth Staley

ABSTRACT

Emily Dickinson's Echology: A Listener's Reconceptualization of Citizenship, Consciousness, and the World

Beth Staley

What I call Emily Dickinson's "echology" combines the terms "echo" and "ecology" to understand how Dickinson's work echoes – and *is* an echo – of the world and how, consequently, her work resides not just in her handwritten documents and their publication in various editions but in an ecology that's tied to the earth that hosted her, the air that faced her, and the sea kept her listening. To assess the critical value of Dickinson's echology, this dissertation begins by apprehending how the story of the echo is a story about sound masking, specifically about how the echo that is an acoustic phenomenon has been masked by the Echo that is the nymph in mythology, which parallels how the echo that is a responsive interaction has been masked by the Echo that is a repeatable broadcast in and beyond mythology. With the masking of the echo by the Echo begun in mythology has come the masking of being by Being in philosophy and the masking of voice by Voice in lyric poetry, and while all these maskings have upheld the role of the speaking subject in western culture, they have also fashioned the world into a reflector of humans.

The enduring popularity of Dickinson's work is an occasion to go back to the story of the echo and approach it through perception rather than narrative because perception in her echology can, I argue, turn the inevitable path from Echo to Being to Voice into the ethical path from voice to being to echo. In chapter one, the democratic Voice of national citizenship unmask a democratizing voice of earthen citizenship, and so citizenship itself is reconceptualized. In chapter two, the cognitive Being of sovereign consciousness unmask the embodied being of shared consciousness, and so consciousness itself is reconceptualized. And in chapter three, the Echo of the world speakable through human nature unmask the echo of the world speakable at the expense of human nature, and so the world itself is reconceptualized. Contextualized by the theories of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Emmanuel Levinas, and Jacques Derrida and in conversation with nineteenth-century pieces by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Herman Melville, John Tyndall, Edward Hitchcock, and Asa Gray, these un-maskings in Dickinson's echology esteem the role of the listening subject over the speaking subject in western culture even as they refashion humans as reflectors of the world and not vice versa.

Dickinson's echology is an opportunity to read her work and listen to the range of human, nonhuman, and nonliving subjects with whom she shared a vast sonic space – one rendered as an acoustic state of radical belonging that yet remains open to everything outside of it, especially the mystery of connection without belonging. While the chapters remain focused on the reconceptualization of citizenship, consciousness, and the world, the conclusion considers how the elements of earth, air, and sea make these reconceptualizations possible and bring our attention to fire as the element in human hands and in the lyric poem as a product not just of this fire but of the balance sought between fire, earth, air, and sea.

Table of Contents

Title Page	i
Abstract	ii
Abbreviations	iv
List of Figures	vi
Introduction: Echology's Unmaskings	1
Chapter One: Little Citizens, Long Silences	43
Chapter Two: Later than Light, Prior to Speaking	75
Chapter Three: Quality of Loss, Verge of Seas to be	103
Conclusion: When They Were Fire	146
Notes	156
Works Cited	174

Abbreviations*

- AC Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA.
- B Dickinson Papers, Boston Public Library / Rare Books, Boston, MA.
- EDA Emily Dickinson Archive, <http://www.edickinson.org/>.
- Fr *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Variorum edition, edited by R. W. Franklin, Belknap P of Harvard UP, 1998. 3 vols.
- H Dickinson Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.
- J *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Including variant readings critically compared with all known manuscripts*. Edited by Thomas H. Johnson, Belknap P of Harvard UP, 1955. 3 vols.
- L *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*. 1958. Edited by Thomas H. Johnson and Theodora Ward, Belknap P of Harvard UP, 1997.
- RS Radical Scatters: Emily Dickinson's Fragments and Related Texts 1870 – 1886. Edited by Marta Werner, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, updated 2007, <http://radicalscatters.unl.edu/>.

*Grateful acknowledgement is made to the physical locations that house the works by Dickinson referenced in this dissertation: Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA; Boston Public Library / Rare Books, Boston, MA; and Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. Grateful acknowledgement is also made to the digital locations that house images of and information regarding these works: Emily Dickinson Archive, <http://www.edickinson.org/>; and Radical Scatters: Emily Dickinson's Fragments and Related

Texts 1870 – 1886, edited by Marta Werner. Finally, grateful acknowledgement is made to the editions that publish Dickinson's works, especially *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson; *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, Variorum Edition, edited by R. W. Franklin; and *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Johnson and Theodora Ward.

List of Figures

1. AC 887, Courtesy of the Amherst College Archives and Special Collections. 62
2. AC 887 a, Courtesy of the Amherst College Archives and Special Collections. 63
3. AC 277, Courtesy of the Amherst College Archives and Special Collections. 155
4. AC 277 a, Courtesy of the Amherst College Archives and Special Collections. 155

Introduction: Echology's Un-maskings

Echo has no Magistrate –

+Catch a Drop of Dew

And the Sun will +free it

With a sneer at you –

Follow +fine Orion till you +furl your Eye –

Dazzlingly decamping

He is +still more high –

Line 2: +Trap – +Bind

Line 3: +loose him –

Line 5: +Wise Orion till you waste your Eye –

Line 5: +lame

Line 7: +just as high

[“Unobtrusive Blossom” is written vertically downward in the left margin]

-Emily Dickinson¹

Reprising The Story of Echo:

“But what is this to me, about an oak or a rock?”²

The story of the echo is a story about sound masking, which happens when the amplitude of one sound masks over and drowns out another one. More specifically, this story is about the masking of the echo itself – the echo we experience as an acoustic phenomenon between a soundmaker and a sound reflector as well as the echo we practice as a responsive interaction between face-to-face soundmakers and sound reflectors. The echo that is an acoustic phenomenon has been masked by the Echo, who we've come to know as the nymph from mythology, and the echo that is a responsive interaction has been masked by a similar Echo, which we've come to know as the repeatable broadcast, that elicitor of cultural force. In the story of the echo, the maskings of the echo by the Echo mark a turning point for the voice, as it becomes, and in many ways remains, romanticized by that nymph and amplified by that broadcast in western culture. As we return to the story of the echo here though, we gain the chance to rehear it as, I argue, a turning point for listening itself instead of the voice itself, and such listening cannot help but deromanticize that nymph and de-amplify that broadcast. The most interesting part about this instance of sound masking is that once the masking Echo diminishes, then we can hear – or at least imagine hearing – the once-masked echo anew.

Because of the masking Echoes that we've come to know as the nymph and the broadcast, popular examples of the echo tend to entail human voices reflecting off inanimate surfaces and returning to them, but when we listen back to the Homeric era, what is possibly the first account of the echo has a more multivalent emergence. This dissertation's focus on the echo in Emily Dickinson's work is an occasion to go back to the story of the echo, restore its valences, and link it to Dickinson's echo – which, instead of turning the world into a reflector of her voice, turns her into a reflector of the world around her. Her echo has less to do with her voice at all and more to do with her listening as it mobilizes reflection. The echo's contingency on the world as a

soundmaker and on the poet as a sound reflector promises that its destiny, especially with regards to us, lies not in returning our voice but in orienting our listening to the world and our sustainability with it. Still, when the echoes that are acoustic phenomena and responsive interactions are sonically and dialogically masked by the Echoes that we've come to know as the nymph and the broadcast, the echo's story and its destiny with regards to us are handed over to the human voice. Releasing this story and its destiny to the ear is a chance to hear them differently, especially as they link to Dickinson's echo.

Just prior to its masking, one of the first instances of the echo follows two moments of hailing in the Homeric *Hymn to Pan*. The hymnist hails the Muse to divulge a tale about Pan, the god of shepherds, and agreeably, the Muse inspires the hymnist to tell it. As the hymn goes on, a group of mountain nymphs hail Pan, his post-hunt din of shouting and reed playing reaches them in their spring, and then the echo emerges. When the echo is translated *to moan*, it is construed as a mysterious dissonance that simply contrasts with the nymphs' jubilation: "the echo moans about the mountain peak" (Athanasakis, trans. 20-21). However, when the echo is translated not as a sound that moans but *as a moaning sound*, it is differently construed as a reflection of the nymphs' voices that is made eerie by the mediation of their setting: "by dark spring waters they [the nymphs] sing / In strains whose moaning echo embraces the mountain's peak" (Crudden, trans. 20-21). The hymn translations offer two options for understanding the echo and its timing after the hailing by the hymnist and then the hailing by the nymphs. The echo could be reflecting sound from an indeterminate origin that is simultaneous with either hailing, or the echo could be reflecting the nymphs' voices in the second hailing. A choice doesn't have to be made though. The resonance between both options is like Pan in this very moment, who "glides now here, now there and then to the middle of the dance, setting the pace with swift feet" (Athanasakis, trans.

20-21). Similarly, the echo “glides now here” as sonic simultaneity with all proximate voices, “now there” as the potential reflection of some of them, “and then to the middle of the dance” where it resonates – where it might even be a third hailing by the panoply that is part voice and part world to all the life within reach of its vibrating continuum. Whether reverberating between the nymphs and the mountain simultaneously or reflectively, the echo is in “the middle of [their] dance,” where it is an index of the contact between soundmakers, sound reflectors, proximate sounds, and the mediate setting. From the perspective of any one participant, it is an index of the contact between that participant and the surrounding world. It is a dance set to run into dawn – at least.

After the *Hymn to Pan*, the story of the echo transforms as it is described differently by Hesiod, Ovid, and others thereafter. Without the official “echo” label, Hesiod’s *Theogony* opens with the reverberating voice belonging to the Muses, a one-way broadcast that, because it masks everything in its path, participates in the sonic interruption of the echo. On the condition that he must praise the Muses first and last, Hesiod accepts the exhalation of their “divine voice” so that the exhalation of his voice may also “glorify what will be and what was before” (22-34). Hesiod immediately quips, “But what is this to me, about an oak or a rock,” and then pays long homage to the Muses’ “lily-like voice as it spreads out” past Olympus to the territory of the immortals in glorification of gods, goddesses, humans, and giants (35-52). When the Muses bless human poets and musicians with their “deathless” song, it is a gift encumbered by their origin as the daughters of Mnemosyne (Memory), and so song obliges a certain forgetfulness in order to allay even sad listeners with “the glorious deeds of people of old and the blessed gods who possess Olympus” (93-103). The power of this song belongs to the voice with enough amplitude and appeal to mask their listeners’ lives as well as their worlds. Here in *Theogony*, the echo is Hesiod’s voice

echoing the Muses' voice in praise of gods and humans. The echo that empowers the voice of Hesiod via the Muses here is much different than the echo that indexes the contact between participants and the world in the hymn above. A blessing from the Muses, almost like a gift of tongues, is a sonic event that celebrates the Echo as an empowerment of the voice over, above, and away from the panoply that celebrates the echo as an index of contact with the world. The Echo enlists the masking of as opposed to the dancing of nearby soundmakers, sound reflectors, sounds themselves, and even the mediate setting containing the oak and the rock that are mocked.

Nonetheless, when comparing *Theogony* with the *Hymn to Pan*, the sonic event that celebrates the Echo as an empowerment of the voice is simply delayed. In typical Homeric hymn structure, the hymnist's generic call for the Muse's inspiration is immediately answered, and the hymnist's voice echoes the Muse's voice, but it is not quite the sonic event that it is in *Theogony*. Robert Germany grants that the Homeric hymnist may not be the same channel for the Muse he hails as Hesiod is for the Muses he hails, and in the *Hymn to Pan* in particular, the hymnist's authority depends on a "blending" between "Muse and music" so that the hymn is not just a "mouthpiece" for the Muse (119). Furthermore, Pan is not mentioned until line 5, a deviation from all other Homeric hymns onset by the name of a god or goddess in the first word or first line. Basically, the hymnist balances the Echo that empowers his voice with his own musical autonomy, but this balance is upset by the sonic event of panolepsy or nympholepsy – the possession of Pan and nymphs as documented by inscriptions and devotions in Pan's grotto at Vari and humorously deprecated by Socrates, Aristotle, and Plutarch. Because of Pan's unrequited love for Echo, popularized overtly by later myths, Pan's appearance spells Echo's appearance on both "phonetic and structural levels," and his tale cannot help but get twisted into

a polyphonous “echo chamber of double beginnings, double middles, repeated words and images, and sustained expectation of closure” (Germany 188, 204).³ Phonetically, the nymphs and Echo herself serve as accompaniments to the hymnist, and structurally, the second half of the hymn, which depicts the birth of barbaric-looking Pan and his presentation at Olympus, echoes the first half of the hymn, which depicts Pan’s hunt and celebration. In the hymn, panoply is a celebration of the echo as an index of its participants’ contact with the world, but as that panoply gets intercepted by the sonic event of panolepsy by Echo, she possesses rather than blesses the hymnist to mask that earlier echo with the Echo that empowers his voice. Pan’s hunt and celebration lead not to dawn but to the nostalgic propitiation of Pan and his father Hermes. There is no dawn. Even when critics debate whether this first echo is or is not the nymph and whether Pan’s presence always spells Echo’s presence, they can’t deny how panoply gets intercepted by a sonic event along the lines of panolepsy as it diverts the tale into propitiation.

Just as Hesiod’s desire for the Muses’ blessing comes with consequences, so Pan’s desire for Echo comes with consequences. In the panoply of the *Hymn to Pan*, the echo unfolds as an index of contact between its participants and the world made of sound makers, sound reflectors, sounds, and the mountainous setting, but mid-panoply, this acoustic phenomenon is interrupted by the sonic event of panolepsy by Echo. Meanwhile, in what could have been the panoply of *Theogony*, the echo could have unfolded as an index of contact between the poet and the world containing the oak and rock, but mid-breath, what might have been Hesiod’s responsive interaction is interrupted by the sonic event of the Muses’ blessing. These sonic events mark not only the sonic interruption of the echo as an acoustic phenomenon but also the dialogic interruption of the echo as a responsive interaction. With the sonic event of panolepsy by Echo in the former text and the sonic event of the blessing by the Muses in the latter one, the Echo

unfolds and reigns as the empowerment of the voice that is anthropomorphized in and possessed by the nymph as well as the voice that is transmitted in and possessed by the repeatable broadcast. Echo, the nymph characterized as the object of Pan's affection as well as the utterance made under the influence of panolepsy, masks the mysterious eruption of the echo. And Hesiod's Echo, the repeatable broadcast characterized by the urge to speak, masks the echo that might have been characterized by the urge to listen to something – anything – before speaking to, with, or even over it. As a legacy to Pan's desire for Echo and Hesiod's desire to Echo the Muses, any Echo that empowers the voice is one that we're prepared to romanticize and amplify in western culture.

As the story of the echo continues, the Echoes that we've come to know through the nymph and the broadcast become inseparable, and so romanticizing the former one is not immune to amplifying the latter one and vice versa. In fact, the activities of romanticizing and of amplifying the Echo that empowers the voice merge together – and become one and the same – when the Muses in *Theogony* gloat to Hesiod: “Field-dwelling shepherds, ignoble disgraces, mere bellies: we know how to say many false things similar to genuine ones, but we know, when we wish, how to proclaim true things” (22-34). When they assert that they can “proclaim true things” on a whim, or “when [they] wish,” they both romanticize and amplify the Echo that empowers their own voice to reflect “true things,” and when they bless others to do the same, they extend their romanticization of and amplification of this Echo to other voices that will reflect the true things that they, the Muses themselves, reflect (22-34). The chain of these Echoes begs uneasy questions about the Muses as well as the blessed ones who echo them. Do the Muses ever wish to proclaim true things? If so, when? And do the blessed hymnists, poets, and musicians who echo the Muses ever wish to proclaim true things? Again, if so, when? Does the

verb, “proclaim,” allege that such truth is made by prolepsis? Even if one can proclaim the truth, if one can do so “when[ever one] wish[es],” then any echo that might have come from a subject devoted to listening becomes, instead, the Echo that comes from a subject intent on speaking.

As products of western culture listening back on these myths, we can situate ourselves in them and imagine how our experience of the echo as an acoustic phenomenon and how our practice of the echo as a responsive interaction would have been, and likely remains, at risk of becoming overwhelmed by the Echo. Those of us who might have been, and might yet become, listening subjects would tire of the same blessed and panoleptic speakers, and many of us would have likely been, and might yet become, such speaking subjects ourselves. As the Echoes that empower the voice through the world continue to mask the echoes that index our contact with it, the story of the echo becomes paradigmatic of the story of sound more generally as it absorbs and manages what Pierre Schaeffer calls the “acousmatic,” or sound with an unseen cause, and what Michel Chion calls the “acousmètre,” or the being that is only voice (Steintrager xi).⁴ At its core, the story becomes about how we as speaking subjects generate enough of what Bernie Krause calls “anthropophony,” a term for sound from human sources, to advertently and inadvertently insulate “biophony,” a term for sound from nonhuman sources, as well as “geophony,” a term for sound from nonliving sources (11-12).⁵ Meanwhile, for those of us who have become speaking subjects or their obedient listeners, whatever sound squeezes through our anthropophony becomes something to mechanize or rationalize in empirical and transcendental narratives respectively. And so, the story of the echo endures a binary split. The mechanization of sound, including the echoes that are acoustic phenomena as well as responsive interactions, is handed over to the empirical narratives housed under the domain of science and technology, and the rationalization of sound, especially the masking of the echo that characterizes the myths that

begin this story, is handed over to the transcendental narratives housed under the domain of language and letters.

The binary between mechanizing and rationalizing sound in this story's two developing narratives is problematic because, above all, it reinforces our roles as speaking subjects. In doing so, the binary submits the echo's diversity of sound sources to masking not only by the Echo that empowers the voice but also by the narratives that grow out of this empowerment. The story of the echo doesn't have to uphold our role as subjects who primarily speak though, nor our role as subjects who primarily speak in either narrative. In fact, the story of the echo can help us trade our role as speaking subjects for our role as listening subjects who are intent on creating equilibrium between the activities of listening and speaking, which will prepare us to put the aforementioned narratives, as well as the ones that disrupt their binarization, into conversation with one another. The echo in Robert Frost's poem "The Most of It" serves as a model for how we can return to the story of the echo to make this trade. Tired of the "mocking [E]cho" that empowers his own voice and turns the world into a reflector of it, Frost begins listening for what he calls "counter-love, original response" (3, 7). The poem reads:

He thought he kept the universe alone;
For all the voice in the answer he could wake
Was but the mocking echo of his own
From some tree-hidden cliff across the lake.
Some morning from the boulder-broken beach
He would cry out on life, that what it wants
Is not its own love back in copy speech,
But counter-love, original response.

And nothing ever came of what he cried
 Unless it was the embodiment that crashed
 In the cliff's talus on the other side,
 And then in the far distant water splashed,
 But after a time allowed for it to swim,
 Instead of proving human when it neared
 And someone else additional to him,
 As a great buck it powerfully appeared,
 Pushing the crumpled water up ahead,
 And landed pouring like a waterfall,
 And stumbled through the rocks with horny tread,
 And forced the underbrush – and that was all.

Although he is listening for what he desires rather than just listening to the world, this pause to listen at all marks his transition into the role of a listening subject who, by the end of the poem, can admit that “nothing ever came of what he cried / Unless it was the embodiment that crashed / In the cliff's talus on the other side” (9-11). While he echoes the “splashing,” “swimming,” and “nearing” of this embodiment, he realizes that it is not, after all, the “counter love” nor the “original response” that he was listening for. Rather, it's a buck. Still, he continues to echo this buck that “powerfully appeared” as it maneuvers through water, rocks, and underbrush with its “horny tread.” The powerful appearance of the buck is also the powerful appearance of Frost's echo. After pausing what he earlier calls the “mocking [E]cho” that had empowered his voice, the curious echo that indexes his contact with the world containing cliff, buck, water, rock, and underbrush is an unmasked stay against his loneliness. This echo remaps anthropophony away

from isolated embellishment and lament and into a kind of panoply with the world's geophony and biophony.

Just as Frost pauses the “mocking [E]cho” in this poem, we can pause the Echoes in either myth above and begin to rehear how the story of the echo might change if subjects trade their roles as speaking subjects for roles as listening subjects who navigate their worlds by ear rather than by voice. What if the Homeric hymnist avoids panolepsy in the *Hymn to Pan* and hears panoply through to dawn rather than escaping it to recall Pan's birth? What if hearing the Muses' resounding broadcast in *Theogony* compels Hesiod not to want to hear them, or not just them, but to want to hear everything including the oak and the rock around him. What if the Muses in *Theogony* celebrate how they listen to instead of how they proclaim true things, and if so what if Hesiod asks those very Muses to bless him not to Echo what they say but to bless him to listen to true things and then, perhaps, to echo those true things themselves? If we pause the masking Echoes, or what Frost might call the “mocking [E]cho” in these myths, we can imagine how these speaking subjects might become listening subjects and how the echo that indexes their contact with the world might remap their anthropophony into panoply with the world's geophony and biophony. As this echo keeps them from getting lost in the Echoes that empower their voices, it also becomes a locatable stay against the loneliness that seemingly found and kept them speaking in the first place.

As we follow the story of the echo into Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, we can see how the echo that indexes contact with the world might have nearly saved Echo herself as well as Narcissus himself, and we can entertain how this echo might save, or nearly save, us as products of western culture who are considering how we can trade our role as speaking subjects for our role as listening subjects. In the moment between Echo's emaciation into voice, and Narcissus's

emaciation into a flower, Narcissus stops amorously gazing at his own watery reflection to stand up, spread his arms, turn to the woods, and ask:

. . . “tell me if any other
 has ever suffered any more than I have,
 for surely you would know, you who have been
 a likely lurking place for so many lovers –
 was there ever one, in all the ages past
 that you recall, who was consumed like me?
 I like what I look at, but what I look at and like
 I can’t locate –” (Martin, trans. 3.569-76).

These latter lines have also been translated as “My joy! I see it; but the joy I see / I cannot find” (Melville, trans. 3.430-63). Instead of the echo that would index his contact with the woods, Narcissus romanticizes and amplifies the Echo that empowers his voice as it is anthropomorphized in his watery reflection and broadcasted through the woods, both of which he remains lost in. What if, as a listening rather than a speaking subject, he let something other than his reflection and his broadcast speak to him – say, the water or even the woods? He might detect the phenomenon of reflection and follow a rippling wave outward to some horizon beyond himself and his voice. Going further back into Ovid’s tale, we can apply this line of inquiry to the moment before Echo incurs Juno’s curse to repeat the ends of phrases. Instead of the echo that would index her contact with Juno, Echo romanticizes and amplifies the Echo that empowers her voice into a bout of idle chatter aimed at preventing Juno from finding Jove with another nymph, and when Juno realizes what has happened, Juno destines Echo to remain lost in idle chatter. What if, as a listening rather than a speaking subject, Echo let something other than

her voice intervene? What if Echo and Juno had connected? If Narcissus and Echo could listen now, would the echo that indexes their contact with the world bring them back from their emaciation into a tiny flower and a chattering echo respectively.

Narcissus's desperate apostrophe and Echo's sympathetic interference are Echoes that empower the voice, but they are also Echoes that doom them to alienation, emaciation, and transformation into features of the very worlds they mask over. Ovid begs the question whether all the woods are comprised of speaking subjects who succumbed to talking over rather than listening to the world of the woods and its inhabitants. So, where do the myths that begin the story of the echo leave the speaking subjects that we know as our beloved rovers, troubadours, explorers, and sages? Why is it tempting to empathize with Narcissus's impossible love for his image and with Echo's altruistic desire to spare the nymph in Jove's embrace from Juno's wrath? Maybe if their love and altruism were led by listening instead of misled by voice, their fates could be different. Instead, they both Echo themselves into an oblivion that might sound familiar to readers of western culture sensitive to the ardent romantics who yearn like Narcissus and the rogue heroes who take matters into their own hands (or voices) like Echo. If such romantics and heroes are not themselves casualties of love and altruism, they can usually be charged with casualties in the name of either love or altruism. "A too-compassionate art," says Adrienne Rich in her poem titled, "At a Back Concert," "is half an art" (10). The poem's last two lines disclose how art can restore rather than emaciate us: "Only such proud restraining purity / Restores the else-betrayed, too-human heart" (11-12). In the story of the echo, that purity belongs to the listening subjects who reflect the world around them rather than the speaking subjects who mask that world, however passionately or compassionately, especially by turning it into a reflector of their voices.

If we are to find the listening subjects, or become listening subjects ourselves, in this story, then we must work through a few more of the Echoes in mythology, philosophy, and lyric poetry that have masked the echo by convincingly rationalizing it along with sound itself in the transcendental narratives that have dominated western culture. Then, with the intervention of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, we can embrace our roles as subjects who primarily listen and then echo the world around us. This intervention of phenomenology is also the invention of communication. By dampening the Echo that empowers our voice, we can fully experience and practice the echo that indexes our contact with the world, and in doing so, we can find ourselves smack dab in the middle of a dance that, ambivalent to any proclamation of true things or any sonic event that will transmit them to us, *is* the panoply of true things. When, as listening subjects, we finally speak by echoing, our voices are not the vocal mask of but the expressed reflection of a perception that, according to Merleau-Ponty, "is a communication or a communion" (334).

Beyond the Middle of the Dance:

Narratives of the Echo

The Echo that empowers the voice not only masks the echo that indexes contact with the world, but it also leads the transcendental narratives that, in traditional mythology, philosophy, and lyric poetry, have rationalized this masking and made it paradigmatic of the anthropophony that more generally masks biophony and geophony. Because the story of the echo is told through these transcendental narratives, Echo's masking of the echo in mythology blends into Being's masking of being in philosophy as well as the Voice's masking of the voice in lyric poetry.

Joseph Loewenstein points out that the echo in the Homeric *Hymn to Pan* generates suspicion because it lacks an obvious purpose, and that's why mythology after the Archaic period participates in not only masking it with Echo herself but in rationalizing this masking with the romance between Echo and Pan. Concurrent with the developing emphasis on the "causal structure of empirical phenomena," the mere juxtaposition of Pan and the echo in the Homeric hymn is remade to feature Pan's unrequited pursuit of Echo by Moschus, the suggestive union between Pan and a less elusive Echo by Callimachus, their relationship harmony by Macrobius, and the popularization of the love story between Echo and Narcissus by Ovid (Loewenstein 23). The echo must be Echo because Pan loves her.

Moving from mythology to philosophy, we get a close-up of the echo that is an acoustic phenomenon and a responsive interaction at the moment when it is internalized in the embodied being of the listener. In the big picture, we have the echo that indexes contact between participants as they reflect the panoply of the world, but within that picture, we have the echo that indexes the contact between each participant's own perception as it reflects sensations in what we might think of as the panoply of embodied being. Combining the big-picture echo of the world with the little-picture echo of embodied being, philosophy gives us the echo that indexes our contact with the world in embodied being. On the heels of mythology though, philosophy also masks that echo with the Echo that empowers the voice of cognitive Being, and in doing so, the capitalization of the Echo is joined by the capitalization of Being. Specifically, the degree to which perception relies on sensations gets masked by the degree to which perception ends in vocal exhortations, pleas, and dialogues that reflect what Loewenstein calls a "literary imitation" of the self in the mind (Loewenstein 25-26). Philosophy after Aristotle rationalizes this masking to differentiate sensory being for animals from cognitive Being for humans. As Daniel Heller-

Roazen shows, the differentiation begins with Aristotle's explanation of how the major sense organ, "*kurion aistheterion*," can convey perception to the mind from each of the five senses individually and all at once (37). Because the common sense faculty of the *kurion aistheterion* functions simultaneously with touch, Heller-Roazen translates it as an "inner touch" that receives and then speaks of sensations, and this speaking faculty is characterized by a "duration" that is "unnamed" yet marked in the uttered imprint of the sensation disclosed to perception (Heller-Roazen 54-55). For humans, the inner touch is the vocal echo of sensation, but nonhumans aren't granted this vocal echo, and the degree to which this echo is or is not vocal all the way through the inner touch's unnamed duration continues to merit attention – attention that is mostly overpowered by the mark of the inner touch's utterance in perception.

Although the little-picture echo that indexes contact between the perceptions and sensations of embodied being might be less vocal and not exclusively human, it – like the big-picture echo in the *Hymn to Pan* – gets intercepted by the Echo that not only empowers the voice but does so through cognitive Being. With that little-picture echo goes, as Heller-Roazen explains, the sensation that is echoed in perception. Although sensation gets removed from discussions of modern consciousness, he still wonders whether such consciousness is really driven by the sensation of embodied being rather than the Voice of cognitive Being. This masking of being with Being and its rationalization endure in work by Rene Descartes, wherein the echo that indexes our contact with the world in embodied being becomes what he calls "resonance," and the Echo that empowers the voice of cognitive Being becomes what he calls "reason." The experience of both echoes – of both resonance and reason – is central to Descartes's nocturnal ruminations in *Meditations on First Philosophy*, which Veit Erlmann reads as a "psycho-sonic exercise" that begins his long yet unfinished attempt to merge reason and

resonance into a new concept of personhood. The merging ultimately becomes the masking of resonance by reason though. Descartes's method of masking is to associate resonance with all the information from his senses and memories and then deem it fallacious by saying that his body itself is not real. He writes:

I shall now consider anew what I believed myself to be before I embarked upon these last reflections . . . in order that there may be nothing at all left beyond what is absolutely certain and *indubitable*. . . .

That is why I shall now close my eyes, I shall stop my ears, I shall call away all my senses, I shall even efface from my thoughts all the images of corporal things, or at least (for that is hardly possible) I shall esteem them as vain and false; and thus, holding converse with myself considering my own nature, I shall try little by little to reach a better knowledge of a more familiar acquaintanceship with myself. (emphasis mine, qtd in Erlmann 30)

With his “sonic decoding” of Descartes's writing, Earlmann points out that the word “indubitable” (italicized) is the usual translation of Descartes's Latin “*inconcussum*,” and because its root “-cutere,” means “to shake violently,” Descartes's terminology exposes the resonance that, here, is aligned with the echo that indexes our contact with the world in embodied being (31-32).⁶

Of course, Descartes ultimately masks that resonance in the reason that is acquired through vocal self-reflection in a soundproofed space that is amenable to ego formation. Descartes spends his life rationalizing his masking of resonance with the reason that, here, is aligned with the Echo that empowers the voice in Cognitive Being. He does so by valuing the role of the speaking subject over that of the listening subject. In *Compendium musicae*, he not

only argues that speaking leads to reason, but that listening leads to fallacy, and that's why he assigns studies of the aesthetic pleasure of sound to physicists for mechanization instead of rationalization.⁷ Although the acquisition of reason entails the resonance of “-cutere,” it ends with the voice, and it's never easy to argue with the closing remarks made by the voice of reason. Still, if Frost could pause the “mocking [Ec]ho” of his own voice, maybe we can pause the Echo that empowers the voice in cognitive Being and then hear – if only by imagination – the echo that indexes our contact with the world in embodied being. Heller-Roazen admits that we're still learning about the degree to which bodily sensation is the secret to all life, human or not.

Because the Echo that empowers the voice in cognitive Being exists mostly in the mind in philosophy, our best chance of pausing it may come by turning to its expression in lyric poetry, where it leads not to the voice of reason but to the voice of feeling. If Descartes honors the role of speaking subjects in philosophy by locating them in a soundproofed room, John Stuart Mill honors the role of speaking subjects in nineteenth-century American lyric poetry by locating them in what, at first, seems like a similar space: one amenable to their “unconsciousness of a listener” where they can capture “feeling confessing itself to itself, in moments of solitude” (345). For Descartes's thinking subjects, the outcome of speaking in the mind is ego formation achieved through the voice of reason, but for Mill's poetic subjects, the outcome of speaking in expression is lyric poetry composed through the voice of feeling. While ego formation addresses the speaking subject oneself, lyric poetry is driven by a lyrical address that entails the speaking poet as well as a speaking audience. Because of this lyrical address, the voice of feeling gets entangled in the currencies of poetic discourse as it makes both poets and their readers into speaking subjects. Virginia Jackson uses Mill's alignment of the lyrical address with both theatrical soliloquy and musical performance to situate it in an “overheard” dimension that is

admittedly more social than solitary (131). The “moments of solitude” described by Mill are, after all, constructed settings wherein the voice of feeling may just as easily belong to the poet writing the lyric poem or to the reader reciting it in a parlor, around a hearth, or among friends.

As lyric poems are consumed, the voice of feeling becomes a *public conduit* for the *solitude* of b/Being, which can be either cognitive Being or embodied being. If this voice becomes a public conduit for the solitude of [B]eing, then it reinforces the Echo that empowers the Voice of cognitive Being. In this case, lyric poetry not only sustains the expression of cognitive Being, but it also turns the voice into the Voice that upholds our role as speakers. At this point, the Echo that empowers the Voice of cognitive Being may, like Frost’s “mocking [Ec]ho” of his own voice, merit pausing. If, on the other hand, this voice becomes a public conduit for the solitude of [b]eing, then it has begun to un-mask the echo that indexes contact with the world in embodied being. In this case, the expression of cognitive Being in lyric poetry is also the shifting and decapitalization of it into embodied being, and the voice, un-capitalized is simply an asset to our role as listeners. There is no need to pause this voice because it is only a voice. Not only is the voice not empowered in the *echo that indexes contact in embodied being*, but it is not even mentioned in that phrase.

The fate and orientation of the v/Voice in lyric poetry depends on its context as a *public conduit* for the *solitude* of [b]eing. Situated in the academic dimension of literary studies, the twentieth-century context for lyric poetry is built on the [V]oice’s expressed *solitude*. Situated in the public dimension of literary culture, the nineteenth-century context for the lyric is built on the [v]oice as a *public conduit*. Readers from both contexts value the v/Voice, but its value in the modern context is appraised according to our role as speaking subjects, and its value in the nineteenth-century context has a chance to be appraised according to our role as listening

subjects. In the latter context, the voice that is a public conduit for the solitude of being may lead us to the echo that indexes our contact with the world in embodied being, which can attune us to the echo that is an acoustic phenomenon and a responsive interaction too. The inevitable path from Echo to Being to Voice may become the ethical path from voice to being to echo. When the voice is simply an un-capitalized asset to our role as listeners, we become listening subjects who will speak rather than speaking subjects who will listen. This renaming of our role might seem small, but it reprioritizes our commitments to listening firstly and speaking secondly.

Emily Dickinson:

Emerging from “other Motes, / Of other Myths”⁸

Echo and Being and Voice become especially intertwined for modern readers trying to understand the bulk as well as the range of lyric poems that define nineteenth-century American literary culture, especially the approximately 1,800 handwritten poems found after the death of one writer in particular, Emily Dickinson. The trend in literary studies has put readers of these poems into a privileged space as spectators to a lyric “I,” whose voice is anchored to “a struggle against the threat of identity’s loss” (Jackson 132, 204). Female sentimental lyricism in the nineteenth century, however, didn’t organize in response to this threat. Instead, it attracted readerly writers who, by co-opting the genre, transacted themselves through its discourse. Despite the modern fiction of lyric reading that is preoccupied with a poet’s identity, the poetess was and is “not a speaker, not an ‘I,’ not a consciousness, not a subjectivity, not a voice, not a persona, not a self” (Jackson 212, 210). She is a listening subject who accepts the noisy call by panoply – the panoply of the world as well as the panoply of embodied being – to speak or echo

it in the lyric. Panoply is the non-origin of the echo in the lyric poem, but like the panoply of the world in mythology and the panoply of the senses in philosophy, it gets masked by the Echo who we've come to know, all over again, as the poetess and as her repeatable broadcast. Literary studies has prompted us to study poems by poetesses, and by Dickinson in particular, for the Echo that empowers the Voice of cognitive Being instead of the echo that indexes her contact with the world in embodied being. To rationalize this masking of the echo with the Echo, we find ourselves justifying the emergence of the poetess, and Dickinson in particular, with a transcendental narrative that befits the striking sound of her Echo, her Being, and her Voice. If we can un-mask her voice though, we can find ourselves understanding the emergence of the poetess, and Dickinson in particular, as part of the story of the echo – the part that entails rehearing voice as a path to rehearing being as well as echo.

Although no echo appears out of thin air, Dickinson's legacy begins as an acousmatic and acousmêtric one that emphasizes the poet who, in later years, remains unseen while sending lyric lines and gifts by post, via messengers, or in a basket lowered from a window in her Amherst, Massachusetts home. Even dubbed as "the Myth," her biography seems to beg, like that strange echo in the *Hymn to Pan*, for causal explanations that justify her emergence – that absorb and manage her acousmatic and acousmêtric presence. Without overtly using the term, "echo," so much recent scholarship on Dickinson participates in the project that is, in this dissertation, conceived as the un-masking of her voice and then her being and then her echo. In lieu of biographical comparisons and anachronistic habits of reading the lyric through twentieth-century conventions, Cristanne Miller argues that the sonic force of Dickinson's poems likens them to songs "waiting for a singer" whose sense of awareness and irony exceeds that required by the usual ballads and hymns of her time (90). In doing so, Dickinson's sonic ingenuity capitalizes on

the value already placed on “originality” in nineteenth-century lyric verse: first, as a kind of “wildness” achieved by experimenting with traditional forms like the ballad; second, according to the academic pedagogy that aligns form with content instead of rule; and third, in lyric’s proximity to what is “lyrical” – with aesthetic invocations of “song, sound, music, and harmoniousness” rather than “subjectivity, address, or temporality” (Miller 20-22). Ultimately, Miller emphasizes that Dickinson’s work isn’t interesting because of formal inventiveness, which we might use to mask her voice with her Voice; it’s interesting because of the volume and magnitude of poems that register a “trying to think” or “meter-making” process through rhythmic and sonic properties encountered in lyric verse – which we might use to un-mask her voice (37). In other words, Dickinson’s work isn’t interesting because she is a notable speaking subject with a memorable Voice but because she’s a careful listening subject with a receptive voice.

In alignment with Jackson and Miller, scholars of nineteenth-century American literature have worked hard to expose the modern fallacies of reading lyric poems by Dickinson and her poetess contemporaries, and in this study, such fallacies are sided with reading their poems for Echoes that empower the Voice in cognitive Being. As these scholars advance the opportunities to read Dickinson and her poetess contemporaries without those fallacies, this study sides those opportunities with reading their poems for echoes that index their contact with the world through embodied being – especially the world of literary culture. Michael Cohen situates their work within intellectual and affective webs of relation wherein poems are not only read, but often not read and not analyzed as much as penned, recited, copied, inscribed, cut, traded, or circulated within communities (7). According to Mary Loeffelholz, the overwhelming social regard for poems allows women in particular to transition from communities of literary edification in

schools to those of literary autonomy in elite culture (3-4). The stakes of this shift are high, according to Paula Bennett, and the sentimental mode of complaint or protest that lets women poets “demand, model, imagine, produce, and defend reforms” in poems leads to the attainment of literary professionalization, civil empowerment, and modernity, but such progress also renders that mode obsolete, and individual rather than collective experience tends to dominate their poetic legacy across the twentieth century into 1960 (10). Aesthetics may outlive witness in the sentimental mode that brings so many poetesses to poetry and that allies so much poetry to progress, but the webs of literary culture aren’t the only ones that might divest the lyric, especially Dickinson’s lyric, of modern interpretations that emphasize this Echo that empowers the Voice of cognitive Being.

We can also situate the lyric in another web of relations – the continuum of the senses between the panoply of embodied being and the panoply of the world. Recovery of the lyric should include recovery of this continuum of the senses because it is precisely what is transcended in the story of the echo told by speaking subjects in the transcendental narratives spanning mythology, philosophy, and lyrical poetry as they bridge the path from Echo to Being to Voice. When we situate the echo and the poem in this continuum of the senses as experienced by Dickinson as well as ourselves, we get to rehear the story of the echo by bridging a path from voice – Dickinson’s and even ours – to being to echo. Like the echo in the *Hymn to Pan*, Dickinson’s echo may sound unique, but this sound has less and maybe nothing to do with how her poems end with her Voice. Instead, it has everything to do with how her echoes emerge from the non-origin of panoply as it resides in the world and in embodied being, both of which are connected by the continuum of the senses that precede and outlive her echoes and poems. Her echo, after all, does not end with the Voice unless we say so. It simply uses the voice as a path to

externalize reflections at various points along the continuum of her senses. With her voice, the sound of her echo – like an acoustic phenomenon or a responsive interaction – indexes her contact with the world of sound makers, sound reflectors, sounds themselves, and their settings by way of her own embodied being with them.

In the poem beginning, “The long sigh of the Frog,” we get a glimpse of how the echo emerges from the non-origin of panoply in the world as well as embodied being as they are connected by the continuum of the senses.⁹ Dickinson reflects a frog’s call as it “Enacts intoxication” for the “Ear” of the “Passer by” who is a listener, letting it stand to reason that the frog’s call might do the same for the Voice of the subject who is a speaker. Intoxication of the ear, however, is different than intoxication of the voice. The poem reads:

The long / sigh of the / Frog

Opon a / Summer’s Day

Enacts / intoxication

Opon the

[end page]

Passer by.

But his / receding Swell

Substantiates / a Peace

That makes / the Ear / inordinate

For corporeal / release –

In this short poem, the frog’s call is a call to listen rather than to speak as its rhythmic crescendo gains the agency to “enact intoxication” and as its “Receding Swell” gains the agency to

“Substantiate a Peace.” When, in “The Most of It,” Frost listens to the world to stop it from simply reflecting him, the sound of that world provides a stay against his loneliness, and in doing so, it keeps him listening. In Dickinson’s poem, however, the sound of the world already provides a stay against her loneliness as a solo “Passer by,” and in doing so, it already keeps her listening not just to avoid loneliness but to follow that sound further and further into the world. As the frog’s call recedes, her “Ear” becomes “inordinate” for the “corporeal release” that might let her or her ear, despite physical or geographical constraints, follow along. The ear’s desire to follow the frog’s call is not a metaphor for the poet who might not want her poem to end because, after all, her poem does end. The ear’s desire to follow the frog’s call is the sign of the poet who is committed to her role as a listener and who – because of the dash that closes the poem – keeps listening after the poem ends. The echo that emerges along the continuum of the senses and uses the voice to externalize her reflection of the world ends with the continuum of the senses. Dickinson’s poems are organized by this continuum of the senses as it precedes and outlives the poem rather than the continuum of her Voice as it begins and ends the poem.

When the voice in one of Dickinson’s poems gets to be what it is, hearing it is like hearing an echo and following it to its source along the continuum of the senses that links the panoply of the world to the panoply of her embodied being. “No lyric can be read lyrically,” says Paul de Man, and “nor can the object of a lyrical reading be itself a lyric” (254). Whether we follow an echo to or towards its source or not, de Man’s point reminds us that we can be too quick in assigning the acousmatic and acousmêtric experience of the echo and the poem to a narrative that transcends that continuum of the senses and rationalizes the echo and the poem as the Voice of Echo herself in mythology and the Voice of Dickinson as “the Myth” in lyric poetry. Even in the moment of assigning it to a narrative though, already our Voice has taken

over in search of understanding the echo and the poem as a Voice. Maybe we can be even quicker in assigning the echo and the poem to what a transcendental narrative transcends. Something besides narrative should expose rather than transcend this continuum of the senses that links the panoply of embodied being – that of the participants in Pan’s hymn, that of Dickinson as a poet, and even that of us as readers – to the panoply of the world.

Back to the Middle of the Dance:

Resonance is “Phraseless – yet it stirs”¹⁰

To expose rather than transcend the continuum of the senses, we can assign the echo and the poem to perception in phenomenology rather than narrative in mythology, philosophy, and lyric poetry. The problem of modern lyric reading posed by de Man is, after all, a problem of perception, which, as Merleau-Ponty states, loses its essential function to “establish or inaugurate knowledge” when it is gauged “through the lens of its results” (17). If perception, and the echo and poem assigned to it, is to gain that function back, it should be cast not with the Voice that assists in transcending the continuum of the senses. When, instead, it’s cast with what Merleau-Ponty calls the entire “field of presence” around and through the voice that reflects an echo or poem, perception exposes the continuum of the senses (277). Cast with this field of presence, the continuum of the senses is where sense and speech elaborate one another, so that when speech emerges, it is “capable of sedimenting and of constituting an intersubjective acquisition” (195-6). As Merleau-Ponty puts it, “we must no longer conceive of perception as a constitution of the real object, but rather as our inherence in things” (366). For example, Dickinson’s perception of her ear’s desire to follow the frog’s call is not a narrative of her desire for the frog, its sound, nor the

poem that reflects them. In Dickinson's perception of her desire to follow the frog's call, the continuum of the senses is exposed as that which is desired in her desire. As Merleau-Ponty confirms, "perception of what is desired through desire, what is loved through love, [and] what is hated through hate" – perception that exposes the continuum of the senses – confirms our own "sensible core" which we might, for the sake of this dissertation, differentiate from our cognitive core (Merleau-Ponty 307).

We can see how perception exposes the continuum of the senses in Dickinson's poem beginning, "It's Like the Light," wherein her comparison of "It" to the light, to the bee, to the woods, to the breeze, and to the morning suggests that "It" is the perception that is like but meaningfully different from each of these things. Such perception is "Best," Dickinson says, "when it's done," because then, "the Everlasting Clocks – / Chime – noon!" Perception is "Best" in this moment because then it exposes what is desired in the desire for any of these things – not the light, the bee, the woods, the breeze, nor the morning that perception is "Like" but the continuum of the senses that, in this poem as well as the poem about the frog's call, outlives the echo and poem. When we rehear the story of the echo through perception in phenomenology, the continuum of our senses *is* what is desired through desire, even though we can get hung up on that desire itself when we tell the story of the echo through narratives that transcend and even mask that continuum. In ideal circumstances, this continuum of the senses is what is loved through love, and in devastating circumstances, it's what is hated through hate. The condition of this continuum as a connector of both the panoply of the world and the panoply of embodied being depends on the condition of both the world and embodied being. It depends on the very sustainability between them, which can be at turns captivating and compromised.

Their sustainability becomes apparent in the difference that perception imposes between the echo and the poem and what the echo and the poem reflect. In Dickinson's poems, as in Merleau-Ponty's final writings, this difference emerges as the "wild participatory logic" of perception as it "ramifies and elaborates itself in language" so that its structures "extend" and "echo" the "deeply interconnected matrix of sensorial reality itself" (Abrams 84). Dickinson registers her awareness of the "wild participatory logic" of perception in her famous line from an 1876 unsigned note to her friend and posthumous editor T. W. Higginson: "Nature is a Haunted House – but Art – a House that tries to be haunted" (L 459 A).¹¹ While Dickinson makes the artist a sound reflector when she suggests that the "haunted" "House" that is art echoes the "Haunted House" that is nature, her de-capitalization of the word "[h]aunted" in reference to art's house confirms that the artist's perception of nature in art is not nature itself. Perception doesn't simply expose things in the panoply of the world because if it did, the artist could reflect nature's Haunted House with art's Haunted House. Instead, perception exposes things through the continuum of the senses as it connects the panoply of the world and the panoply of the artist's embodied being, and by such perception, the artist can only reflect nature's Haunted House with art's haunted House. The way the echo or poem differs from – and in doing so comments on – what it reflects guarantees that we can learn something about the sustainability of the world and the artist's embodied being as they're connected by this continuum. "[T]hinking about echoes," says Mark M. Smith "is a way to think about the retrievability or irretrievability of sonicity, the central importance of historical context to understanding sound as sense and as subject, and the ability of print to reliably capture what actors in the past thought about what they heard, and what they did not" (56).

That an artist's reflection of nature in art can only try to be haunted is its greatest and greenest advantage because in the difference imposed by that reflection, perception exposes the condition of the continuum of the senses between the panoply of the world and the panoply of embodied being. Neither a trope nor a technique, Dickinson's art as echo, what I call "echology" combines the terms "echo" and "ecology" to study the ecology of the echo that, when it's assigned to perception instead of narrative, exposes the continuum of the senses and tells us something about the condition of that continuum too. Echology is based on the actual structure of an echo that, as R. Murray Schafer insists, is no mere repetition but a mirror reflection of an original sound wave bouncing back at an equal angle, the doubling being enabled by the sound's ghost hidden on the other side of the reflecting surface (218). In echology, the original sound wave hails from the panoply of the world, and when it reaches the poet as a sound reflector, its doubling in the echo or the poem (or the echo in the poem) is enabled by the sound's ghost in the panoply of the poet's embodied being. As put forth in this dissertation, Dickinson's echology affirms the perspective anchored to the role of the listening subject rather than the speaking subject, but for any perspective to "reinvision [sic]" environmental critique in western culture, it must, according to Lawrence Buell, be "critically reinvisioned in order to enlist [it] to this end" (22). In this spirit, Dickinson's echology reinvisions the perspective of the listening subject as one ever oriented to perception as it exposes the continuum of the senses between the panoply of the world and of the poet's embodied being. By reinvisioning the perspective of the listening subject, we hear how the listening subject can reinvision environmental critique by correcting the ego-driven pleasure of the echo as a striking sound with the eco-driven consequence of the echo as an indicator of the world and our being in it. When the echo is an index of our contact with the

world in embodied being, the echo is also an ethics of the sustainable condition of the continuum of the senses.

Echology:

“Echo has no Magistrate”¹²

The echo in Dickinson’s poem beginning “Echo has no Magistrate” shows us how the echo is an index of our contact with the world in embodied being and, thus, how the listening subject who assigns this echo to perception becomes engaged in environmental critique. This poem serves not only as the epigraph in this introduction but also as the *ars poetica* for Dickinson’s echology as elaborated across this dissertation. In this short piece, Dickinson reflects three echoes: one generic, one felt on her skin, and one visualized across the sky. The poem reads:

Echo has no Magistrate –

+Catch a Drop of Dew

And the Sun will +free it

With a sneer at you –

Follow +fine Orion till you +furl your Eye –

Dazzlingly decamping

He is +still more high –

Line 2: +Trap – +Bind

Line 3: +loose him –

Line 5: +Wise Orion till you waste your Eye –

Line 5: +lame

Line 7: +just as high

The opening line, “Echo has no Magistrate,” is Dickinson’s statement about the generic echo’s immunity to power, which is extended to the felt echo of dew on the skin and the visualized echo of the constellation Orion across the sky. Per the poem proper, the echo of dew is felt with a “Catch,” but per the variants, the echo of dew may also be felt with a “Trap” or a “Bind.” When the echo of dew on her skin is caught, Dickinson experiences the echo as an index of her contact with the world in embodied being. Her perception of this echo exposes the continuum of her senses around it, and because the “Sun will free it,” the continuum suggests a kind of sustainable equilibrium between the panoply of her embodied being and of the world. However, when, per the poem’s variant, the echo of dew on her skin is trapped, which is reminiscent of a narrative, or bound, which is reminiscent of a book, then Dickinson seemingly experiences the Echo as an empowerment of the Voice of cognitive Being. Whereas catching the dew is a felt echo that lends itself to perception as it exposes the continuum of the senses, trapping and binding the dew is a forced Echo that lends itself to a narration that has already transcended the continuum of the senses around it, whether sustainable or – because of the trapping and binding – more likely unsustainable. Whether the felt echo of dew is caught for perception or whether the forced Echo of dew is trapped and bound for narration, it will be either freed of “loose[d]” respectively by the sun. Whether in perception or narration, echo “has no Magistrate.”

Still, the degree to which catching a drop of dew can become trapping and binding it reminds us how easy it is for the poet’s echo of this felt echo to get masked by the potential Echo

of a forced echo. Nowhere does Dickinson register the ease of this masking better than in the poem beginning “My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun,” which reverses her usual reflection of the world. Instead, the world reflects the gunshot from the gun that is her life with its “straight reply.”¹³ This Echo of the gun becomes emblematic of the Echo that empowers the Voice of cognitive Being. As such, the gunshot is the Echo that is an anthropomorphized and one-way broadcast of her life as loaded and shot by a hunter. The gun is empowered to “speak / for Him,” to “smile” on the “cordial” valley’s light, and to “lay a Yellow / Eye” and “emphatic Thumb” on foe. The last line posits the gun as an instrument that can kill but not, itself, be killed. Because the gun’s situation of its owner as a speaker is discomfoting, it is suggestive of the gun’s situation of its owner as a listener, which might be less discomfoting. The poem, after all, doesn’t have to be an allegory about the gun itself, especially since it can serve as an allegory about the gun owner instead. On the one hand, this gun owner might be a speaking subject with an instrument that is emblematic of the Echo that empowers the Voice of cognitive being – an instrument that both romanticizes and amplifies that very Echo. On the other hand, this poem suggests that the gun owner could have been – and might yet become – a listening subject with an instrument that heightens the stakes for un-masking the echo that indexes his contact with the world in embodied being – an instrument that should de-romanticize and de-amplify every possible echo. Even America’s most famous woodsman, Daniel Boone, would have taken up for the gun owner as a listening subject who learns a variety of languages without letting anthropophony hide the secrets of geophony and biophony on America’s frontiers and whatever they evolve into next.¹⁴ A listener takes extra caution with the instrument that is the gun or the voice.

If “Echo has no Magistrate” is an *ars poetica* for Dickinson’s echology as it advances listening to and echoing the world, then “My Life had stood – / a Loaded Gun” is a warrant for her commitment to listening not just *with* her ears and not just *because of* the instruments at hand but *with and because of* the whole continuum of her senses as it links the panoply of the world to the panoply of her embodied being. Returning to the second stanza of “Echo has no Magistrate,” the echo of Orion across the sky is visualized, just as the frog’s call is tracked in “The long sigh of the frog,” until it’s out of range. The constellation remains as high as the frog’s call is far. To futilely follow the constellation like some object of desire would be to “furl” or, per the poem’s variant, “waste” the “Eye,” but to let her perception of this echo expose the continuum of the senses is to anticipate what’s next – just as Dickinson does when she lets the sun dry the dew on her hand and when she ends her poem about the frog’s call with the dash that keeps her listening. While the echo of dew felt in this poem’s first stanza and the echo of the constellation watched in the second one can be reflected as echoes that index her contact with the world in embodied being, their perception exposes the continuum of the senses that precedes and outlives the echo and the poem. This poem, too, ends with a dash.

The World and Language of Dickinson’s Woods:

What Happens When “Oaks untwist their / fists –”¹⁵

Because Dickinson’s echology holds out the possibility of living our lives as listening subjects who will speak rather than speaking subjects who will listen, it anticipates Bruno Latour’s critique of the “indisputable speech” voiced by representatives who not only assume mute complicity on many facts from the “speaking subjects” that they represent but also render

“speaking facts” from the mute things in the world that they represent (68). Whether modern beings possess speech or not, they don’t speak “on their own” in public life (Latour 68). While democracies run discursively, they also deny the incorporation of minority and nonhuman subjects and exclude the public life residing in science labs as well as the “multiplicity of voices that can make themselves heard and thus modify the future composition of the collective” (Latour 70). For this reason, Latour argues that a republic must account for all beings and their speech impediments before claiming an authorized voice to speak. One of the only ways to account for them, though, is to trade the Echo that empowers the Voice in cognitive Being for the echo that indexes contact with the world in embodied being, which finds us trading our role as subjects who will speak with our role as subjects who will listen. Latour reminds us that voice is always a representational concept that must be used rather than empowered to reflect contact and thus accurately represent contact. In situations when firsthand contact is not possible, the challenge is to reinvent listening before and ahead of speaking.

Latour’s argument brings Dickinson’s echology into focus as an account of what or who she shares or hopes to share belonging with – an account that she makes by listening. Dickinson’s listening opens sonic spaces where concepts, like a country’s republic as critiqued by Latour, can be reconceptualized with aural deconstruction. For example, Dickinson listens to the woods as a nonhuman other excluded from representational status in the United States as a country composed mostly of their terrain. In her 1877 letter to Abigail Cooper, Dickinson designates the woods itself as opposed to the land of liberty itself as the object of the opening line “My Country, ’tis of thee” in the popular song “America” by Samuel Francis Smith. ““My Country, ’tis of thee,”” she goes on “has always meant the Woods – to me – ‘Sweet Land of Liberty,’ I trust is your own –” (L 509).¹⁶ As opposed to the country comprised of the nationally-

recognized “Sweet Land of Liberty” that is not only one’s “own” but that might also be “own[ed],” Dickinson’s country is comprised of the less recognized woods that she might share a sense of belonging with but never own. Wrestling the tension between the song’s popular melody and its exclusive patriotism, Dickinson unsettles this line’s concept of her country’s republic by remixing it to reflect her actual contact with the country’s dominant terrestrial ecosystem bordering private property in and beyond the United States – the woods. While Dickinson’s distinction exposes the degree to which this line may have been sung as an Echo that empowers the Voice of cognitive Being, it also exposes the degree to which it might be sung as an echo that indexes her or any singer’s contact with the world of the woods in embodied being. Turning this line into an echo, Dickinson squares our attention as listeners to our actual contact with the country’s ecosystem instead of masking it as a sweet land of liberty, which it might be to some people, especially landowners. Still, reflecting rather than masking the country ““of thee”” means accounting for a range of human, nonhuman, and nonliving others within it.

Dickinson echoes the woods as a nonhuman other that itself is a terrain rife with echoes that index contact between the range of its inhabitants. If listening to the woods helps Dickinson articulate what the concept of a country might be to her, continued listening to the woods in the poem beginning “Baffled for just a day or two” helps her imagine what the concept of country might be to the woods itself and the range of inhabitants in it.¹⁷ Dickinson is drawn to the changing appearance of the woods after noticing the unexpected blooming of a flower, or “Maid,” in her garden. The poem reads:

Baffled for just a day or two –

Embarrassed – not afraid –

Encounter in my garden

An unexpected Maid.

She beckons, and the woods start –

She nods, and all begin –

Surely, such a country

I was never in!

While the flower, or “Maid,” grows in Dickinson’s garden, and the “woods” and “all” thrive within her proximity, what Dickinson calls the “country” that gathers the “Maid,” “woods,” and a lush yet inclusive “all” is one that she “was never in!” The exclamatory end punctuation lends awe to this country she catches a glimpse of, but like the drop of dew she catches in “Echo has no Magistrate,” catching what she glimpses and then echoing that glimpse must never become trapping or binding that glimpse and then Echoing it. She can visit the country comprised of the woods and its inhabitants by echoing to and with their “beckon[ing],” “start[ing],” “nod[ding],” and “begin[ning].” If she opts to Echo through or over this country though, she will be intruding, even masking, it. The contrast between visiting and intruding this country becomes stark when Dickinson’s echoing of the woods confronts the thief’s Echoing through the woods in the poem beginning “I robbed the Woods,” which reads:

I robbed the Woods –

The trusting Woods –

The unsuspecting Trees

Brought out their Burrs and mosses

My fantasy to please –

I scanned their trinkets curious –

I grasped – I bore away –
 What will the solemn Hemlock –
 What will the Oak tree say?¹⁸

This poem was later revised into the poem beginning “Who robbed the Woods,” which reads:

Who robbed the Woods –
 The trusting Woods?
 The unsuspecting Trees
 Brought out their Burrs and Mosses –
 His fantasy to please –
 He scanned their trinkets – curious –
 He grasped – he bore away –
 What will the solemn Hemlock –
 What will the Fir tree – say?¹⁹

The thief intrudes on the country comprised of the woods and its inhabitants only to turn it into a reflector of his or her taste as well as his or her crime. In the “trusting Woods” and “unsuspecting Trees,” this first- then third-person thief tampers with their “Burs and mosses,” “scans” their “trinkets,” and then takes whatever items fulfill his or her personal “fantasy to please.” In contrast to this thief that listens only to oneself, the last two lines are invitations to listen to the ransacked country of the woods. Dickinson writes: “What will the solemn Hemlock - / What will the Oak tree say?” The subsequent version has a slightly different final line: “What will the Fir tree - say?” By ending the poem with these questions, Dickinson lets her reader think about the slippery slope from robbery to deforestation – from visiting to intruding the country comprised of the woods and its inhabitants. Will this country overcome the Echoing of the human hands

and saws across their grounds and through their trunks? If so, are they in any condition to respond? If not, what does the once-wooded and once-inhabited country sound like? The trees' potential answer or lack thereof is Dickinson's and our potential echo or lack thereof. Keeping all echoes and poems assigned to perception rather than narration promises that they continue to expose the continuum of the senses (Dickinson's and ours), or lack thereof, rather than transcend them.

The concept of country according to Dickinson and the concept of country according to the woods and its inhabitants merge in the sonic space of their belonging in the poems beginning "Of Brussels – it was not" and "The Bee is not afraid of me."²⁰ In the former poem, this sonic space is where seeds purchased from the woods by the wind are sold for "a gentle price" reasonable for the "poorest" of "Beggar" or "Bird." And in the latter poem, this sonic space is one Dickinson "know[s]" and "come[s]" to with a sense of familiarity and equanimity. Confirming that she knows not only the space but its inhabitants like the "Butterfly," she adds: "The pretty people in the Woods / Receive me cordially." As this sonic space expands to include the audible currents of "Brooks" and "Breezes," Dickinson laments the absent "mists" and ends the poem by asking, "Wherefore mine eye thy silver mists, / Wherefore, Oh Summer's Day?" If wondering what the trees will say after their country is robbed keeps her ears, as well as our ears, listening in the poem beginning "I/Who robbed the Woods," then wondering about the mists and summer's day in this poem keeps all of her and our senses, each one like an ear, listening too. Again, the potential presence or absence of the mists is the potential presence or absence of the echo, whether Dickinson's or ours, the perception of which keeps the continuum of the senses in exposed. If the condition of the continuum of the senses between the panoply of the world and the panoply of embodied being is sustainable, then no narrative will do justice to

the absolute wonder of it, and if it is not sustainable, then no narrative will excuse the absolute pity of it. Assigning the echo and the poem to perception rather than narration is one way to expose the condition of the continuum of the senses and, in doing so with these poems about the woods, to productively reconceptualize our notion of a country's republic.

Beyond this small case study of Dickinson's echology in the sonic space that she shares with the woods, the following chapters of this dissertation will elaborate Dickinson's echology in the sonic spaces that she shares with a range of others. Just as Dickinson's listening to the woods as a nonhuman other opens a sonic space where the country as a republic is reconceptualized by perception rather than narration, Dickinson's listening to what or who is other will open sonic spaces where citizenship, consciousness, and world are reconceptualized in chapters one, two, and three respectively. As perception keeps the continuum of the senses exposed throughout these chapters, perception will become the aural deconstruction of Voice to voice in the first one, Being to being in the second one, and Echo to echo in the third one. In chapter one, Dickinson will listen to a range of human, nonhuman, and nonliving subjects in a sonic space that will become an acoustic state of radical instead of national belonging. Inventing a kind of citizenship that is earthen rather than national, she'll echo and echo with the democratizing voice of earthen citizenship as it deconstructs the democratic Voice of national citizenship. In chapter two, listening within this large acoustic state of radical belonging will posit Dickinson face-to-face with a range of others starting with the air itself, and when she echoes these moments of facing, the traces of shared consciousness between subjects will transform her sense of herself and verify her embodied being as it deconstructs cognitive Being. In chapter three, Dickinson will find herself in sonic spaces where there is no connection of belonging. With depersonalization, she will deepen her listening to what or who is other, but all she will be able to echo is the world felt

at the expense of herself and her human nature. When she echoes this world though, she will gain a sense of how the echo of and to this world can deconstruct the Echo that masked it. While each chapter reconceptualizes its own concept by aurally deconstructing either voice, being, or echo, each chapter will organize around Dickinson's practice of echoing the world. As such, the echo in chapter one will convey what the voice of earthen citizenship might sound like for those who share radical belonging – and even for us; the echo in chapter two will convey what embodied being sounds like for those who share consciousness – and even for us; and the echo in the third chapter will convey what the physical world might sound like despite human listeners – and even without us.

Hearing Echo and Narcissus:

The “Unobtrusive Blossom”²¹

Before moving forward, this introduction to Dickinson's echology merits a final word about the echo and how its assignment to perception is also its assignment to aural deconstruction. Even though this echo follows the actual structure of an echo, it's still a frame, and because of the way a frame works, perception of it becomes aural deconstruction. According to Elizabeth Grosz, the “construction” or “fabrication” of the “frame” is what allows art to touch earth's cosmological forces and potentially conceptualize or reconceptualize them (10). Recalling Dickinson's line about art and nature as haunted houses, the artist may use art to frame the haunted house that is nature, but that art will, in turn, frame the artist back. For example, when an artist uses a stanza to frame only part of nature, like a compelling sound, that stanza will frame the artist as someone compelled by that particular sound in nature. If Grosz's

understanding of the artist's frame tells us something about the frame that is Dickinson's echo, then Schafer's understanding of a listener's "framework" tells us something about the framework that is Dickinson's echology as it contains echoes that are poems and echoes within her poems. According to Schafer, a listener's framework for listening consists of "figure[s]" such as signals or soundmarks, a "ground" that includes ordinary or common sounds, and a "field" that is shared by all sounds (152). While figure and ground sounds can't be heard simultaneously, they can be reversed, so a "vital acoustic experience" requires listeners to recess figure sounds to the ground and elevate the ground to figure status (Schafer 152). The framework of Dickinson's echology operates on this reversal as her echoes continually switch between reflecting figure sounds and reflecting ground sounds. This framework even justifies her habit of inserting and adding variant words and phrases in her poems. As soon as her echo frames something one way and frames her back too, then she listens, and another one of her echoes frames something another way and thus frames her back too.²² Perception of the echo as a frame not only exposes the continuum of the senses that precedes and survives the echo, perception of the echo as a frame becomes the aural deconstruction of each echo from the Echo it must resist.

Basically, our thinking about the frame that is the echo and the framework that is echology means that we never forget about the frame that is the Echo – that every echo and the framework of echology resist the Echo. With Grosz's understanding of the frame in mind, our appreciation of what we can learn about ourselves when we use the echo and it frames us back must be tempered by our awareness of what we can become if we revert to the Echo and it frames us back. Before heading into the chapters of this dissertation, this introduction's small case study of Dickinson's echology in the sonic space that she shares with the woods bears one more listen. In contrast to the way Echo and Narcissus navigate the woods by voice in Ovid's

Metamorphosis, Dickinson navigates the woods by ear in her poems. She reflects the woods without turning them into reflections of her own voice as Echo does or reflections of her own image as Narcissus does. Because Echo and Narcissus practice the Echo that empowers the Voice of cognitive Being, their Echoes frame the woods by masking it, and that Echo, in turn, frames them back by masking them – specifically, by reducing them to their masks only: a mere echo and a mere blossom respectively. Because Dickinson practices the echo that indexes her contact with the world in embodied being, her echo frames the woods by un-masking it, and that echo, in turn, frames her back by un-masking her as more than the “the Myth” that literary studies once deemed her. As Dickinson’s echology reverses the path from Echo to Being to Voice as one from voice to being to echo, it aims to un-mask whatever it can. In the left column of the poem beginning “Echo has no magistrate,” the words “Unobtrusive Blossom” are written vertically downward. Turn the document page counter-clockwise, and the poem’s seven lines radiate upward from the now-horizontal and regularized phrase. This poem about the echo blooms like petals from this phrase referring to an “Unobtrusive Blossom.” Both [e]cho and [n]arcissus are counted in the echo that indexes Dickinson’s contact with the world in embodied being. When we assign this echo to the perception rather than the narration of the world still inhabited by [e]cho and [n]arcissus, the continuum of the senses that connects the panoply of this world to the panoply of the poet’s embodied being precedes and outlives this poem as it retells, or better yet reuses, the story of the echo. In doing so, this continuum of the senses promises that the way the story is reused through and after [e]cho, [n]arcissus, and Dickinson depends on us. Instead of retelling it over and over, we might reuse it to listen over and over. Perception becomes and is always becoming aural deconstruction.

Chapter One: Little Citizens, Long Silences

There is no Silence / in the Earth – so silent
 As that endured
 Which uttered, would / discourage Nature
 And haunt the World –

-Emily Dickinson²³

Introduction:

“Where melody is not / Is the unknown peninsula”²⁴

As Dickinson listens to a range of human, nonhuman, and nonliving others who are little, barefoot, winged, and spacious, she echoes them and sometimes even echoes with them, and so the sonic space that they share becomes an acoustic state of radical belonging that, to Dickinson, merits distinction from any authorized state of national belonging. While her acoustic state of radical belonging is a sonic space, and any authorized state of national belonging is, well, a national space, their distinction is Dickinson’s opportunity to create an experimental kind of citizenship that is open to herself as well as those with whom she shares this acoustic state of radical instead of national belonging. It’s not hard to imagine the appeal of an experimental kind of citizenship to a woman who was a United States citizen but who lacked the full rights guaranteed to adult white male property owners in nineteenth-century America. If she didn’t question the scope of United States citizenship for herself, she likely couldn’t help but question

both the scope and availability of it within the context of her family's Homestead, where house workers included African Americans, Native Americans, and Irish immigrants.²⁵ During her temporary-to-permanent employment, Irish-born Maggie Maher remained a devoted confidante to Dickinson and her sister Lavinia, and vice versa.²⁶ It's possible that Dickinson's personal bond with house workers was more meaningful than her family's ties with the Amherst elite because according to Dickinson's careful yet nontraditional funeral arrangements, Maher's brother-in-law Tom Kelley was her lead pallbearer, and it was he along with five poor Irish Catholic laborers who carried her casket out the back door of her house, through the garden, barn, and grassy fields, and to her family's cemetery plot. Jay Leyda suggests that Dickinson may have found a lifelong ally in Maher and that, additionally, she may have orchestrated her path to the grave as a "a pageant of her allegiances" (265-67). Aife Murray agrees that this final wish seems to honor the intimacy felt between Dickinson and Homestead workers (24).²⁷ If it could have materialized beyond her poems, an experimental kind of citizenship designated by an acoustic state of radical belonging would have been more inclusive of these workers than the United States citizenship designated by the authorized state of national belonging.

The different roles adopted by subjects in each state of belonging elucidates why systems of citizenship in authorized states tend to operate best for subjects with full national belonging. On the one hand, subjects sharing an authorized state of national belonging take on the role of speaking subjects, but their democratic Voice risks hostility when it tends to mask or silence what or who is other. On the other hand, subjects sharing an acoustic state of radical belonging take on the role of listening subjects, and their democratizing voice extends hospitality as it tends to echo and echo with what or who is other – as Dickinson's voice does in her poems. When citizenship measures degrees of national belonging in an authorized state, it is only really

enjoyed by speaking subjects who share full national belonging and can vote on leaders who will then speak for them. As such, citizenship excludes some of its own as well as many who are not its own. If citizenship could honor the radical belonging in an acoustic state, then it could be enjoyed by every listening subject who echoes and echoes with one another, and citizenship itself would operate by inclusion instead of exclusion. When the democratic Voice of speakers with full national belonging can't reinvent citizenship in their authorized state to accommodate variations of belonging, the democratizing voice in Dickinson's poems suggests that an experimental citizenship in an acoustic state of radical belonging may pick up where the other one leaves off.

During Dickinson's life, the democratic Voice of speakers who shared full national belonging remained integral to preserving three features of national citizenship as it operated by exclusion: the interiorization of citizens' ideas, the image of citizens' fraternity, and the abstraction of non-citizens' deaths. To preserve the interiorization of citizens' ideas, a norm dating back to antebellum culture, this democratic Voice could be used to encourage citizens to possess all the ideologies that the authorized state valued but perhaps excluded and definitely could not regulate, but as Christopher Castiglia argues, this Voice could not be used to express these ideologies, so keeping them interiorized led to a general "interiorization of the social" (4). Even if these ideas became audible in the timeless institutional discourse that lamented "an undemocratic past" and promised a "democratic future," they would still get drowned out in actionable political discourse because this democratic Voice itself could not demand a "democratic *now*" (Castiglia 5). To preserve the image of citizens' fraternity as one of white men wielding authority from what Dana Nelson describes as "the space of the son" in deference to the founding fathers, this democratic Voice could be used to emphasize tradition but not to address

any very real differences between and among fraternal men let alone anyone else (22). And to preserve the abstraction of non-citizens' deaths, this Voice could be used, as Russ Castronovo shows, to mute non-citizens through actual and social deaths, which could also repress "nonnational cravings for more complexly lived subjects" (6). According to Castronovo, citizenship itself remains imbricated with the "material prehistories of memory, desire, and community that were sloughed off like so much dead skin in order to lay bare the fresh, timeless body of the citizen in the first place" (23). In these prehistories is the democratizing voice masked by the democratic Voice that, despite that masking, still begs for listening rather than speaking subjects who might hear it at all and maybe echo or echo with it and, perhaps, reimagine citizenship through a feature that Castiglia calls "*humanism without humans*" (15).

During Dickinson's time, the events of Amherst life would have been routinely handed over to the democratic Voice practiced by citizens enjoying full national belonging, but major events like the Civil War and the waves of Irish immigration meant that this Voice could not elegantly hide a key flaw of citizenship in an authorized state of national belonging – namely, that despite operating by exclusion, citizenship still metonymized all subjects' bodies with all national spaces as bound to the interests of the authorized state itself. Because of this metonymy, many citizen subjects were committed to Civil War battlefields and graves. While Dickinson's own brother Austin had the uncomfortable privilege of paying \$500 for a soldier to enlist in his place, local acquaintances such as the Adams brothers and Frazer Stearns were casualties of the war, and Dickinson's friend T. W. Higginson led a black regiment in South Carolina in 1862. Also because of this metonymy, citizens with full national belonging occupied community centers while citizens lacking full national belonging as well as non-citizens took to undocumented margins like Kelley Square, the residence of many Homestead workers which

was never marked on an Amherst map. Murray confirms that directories located Kelley Square residents at the nearby train depot rather than at their exact address. The democratic Voice that serves the interests of an authorized state of national belonging does so at the expense of national citizenship's exclusions and metonymies. Against that Voice, Dickinson hears the advantage of a democratizing voice that might serve the interests of an acoustic state of radical belonging as it thrives within and beyond that state, and with that voice, she apprehends what could be the inclusions of its citizenship. As such, she makes the common ground of this acoustic state of radical belonging – the earth itself – the testing ground for her experimental citizenship.

I deliberately use the word “earth” because it is also a body that is metonymized with national space as bound to the interests of an authorized state of national belonging even though it should be the other way around. The national space of any authorized or even any unauthorized state should consider itself bound to the interests of the earth. National space is, after all, part of the earth and not vice versa. If an authorized state of national belonging disintegrates and its space loses the “national” descriptor, then earth is what's left, and if earth disintegrates, then the national space of any authorized state goes with it. Still, the relationship between earth and state, and especially between the natural law of the earth and the positive law of the state, appears to be somewhat arbitrary during Dickinson's time. For example, while Thoreau turns to earth's natural law to articulate his support for the abolition of slavery, Deak Nabors finds him unable to confirm whether natural law should be obeyed instead of or integrated into positive law. What is certain, for Thoreau, is that natural law will survive its denial by positive law, and so he turns the water-lily into a symbol of natural law as it stands for “integrity” when independent of positive law and for “hope” when dependent on it, and then he aspires to a time when “men's deeds will smell as sweet” as that very water-lily (Nabers 843).

The relationship between these laws might be conceived as arbitrary though because, especially for Thoreau, they are “alternative parts of a single larger system” (Nabers 842).

For Dickinson, however, the relationship between earth and state and their laws is not so arbitrary. Instead of taking something from the earth that is emblematic of natural law and posing it to the state to inspire positive law, Dickinson takes something from the state that is emblematic of positive law and plants it into the earth to see if it can, with an entirely new reconceptualization, survive and adapt. So while Thoreau takes the water-lily from the earth and poses it to the state, which he hopes may someday smell as sweet, Dickinson takes citizenship from the state and transplants it into the earth, the common ground for the acoustic state of radical belonging for all subjects – human, nonhuman, and nonliving – who will, in their own way, listen. Her experimental citizenship co-opts the flaw in national citizenship whereby it operates by exclusion yet metonymizes all subjects’ bodies with national space and binds them to the interest of the authorized state of national belonging, which will then use a democratic Voice to justify – or more often mask – what happens to anyone, anything, and the earth itself. Hers operates by inclusion and more effortlessly metonymizes all subjects’ bodies with their sonic space and binds them to the interest of the acoustic state of radical belonging, which uses a democratizing voice to echo what happens to anyone, anything, and the earth itself. Not only does Dickinson use a democratizing voice to echo and echo with the range of subjects rooted more by the interests of their acoustic state of radical belonging than any authorized state of national belonging, but she also uses this voice to *call* them “citizens.” Her experimental citizenship is earthen citizenship. In this poetic transplantation, Dickinson tests whether an earthen citizenship can thrive in this acoustic state instead of wither in or under any authorized state.

The term “citizen,” however, is burdened by its fluctuation between possibility and limit since its new roots in the earth are still at the mercy of the state that has territorialized it. Dickinson’s transplantation of citizenship into the earth exposes the democratizing voice exchanged between subjects sharing a radical state of belonging, but this transplantation also exorcises this democratizing voice from the earth itself – thereby exposing the discordancy between this democratizing voice and the democratic Voice exercised by select citizens with full national belonging. In the poem beginning “There is no Silence in the Earth,” which also serves as the epigraph to this chapter, Dickinson depicts this discord as the silencing of a democratizing voice that can’t help but remain silent or, if “uttered,” be sonically masked. She writes:

There is no Silence / in the Earth – so silent
 As that endured
 Which uttered, would / discourage Nature
 And haunt the World –

The location of silence in the earth is the location of the democratizing voice expressed and exchanged by subjects sharing an acoustic state of radical belonging, and despite “discourage[ment]” and “haunt[ing],” this location calls for subjects who will listen to and echo it – or echo with it – rather than subjects who will justify the “Silence” or continually mask over it. By listening to and echoing that “Silence” in the earth, we forge a path towards listening and echoing the democratizing voice that will encourage “Nature” and un-haunt “the World.”

Dickinson’s call to listen to and to echo the earth anticipates Bruno Latour’s focus on the “metamorphic zone” as the source of agency where “actants” are located before they’re politicized as “actors” that might support either nature or nation (“Agency” 13). Latour’s goals are first, to discard the notion that “speaking of Earth” as a “living organism” is a return to

animism, and second, to acknowledge a common world that can recognize more subjects because it isn't fractured into an inanimate domain with no agency and an animate domain with all agency ("Agency" 13-14). Dickinson's transplantation of citizenship into the earth is a chance to echo and echo with the earth as a living subject with agency and to echo and echo with the range of subjects with agency in the acoustic state of radical belonging on the earth. This echoing isn't just endowed by hearing these subjects though, it's endowed by the sensory expectation of them and their shared agencies, known and unknown, as they'll impact what Latour calls the "same shape-changing destiny" which is both theirs as well as ours ("Agency" 15). Even when listening doesn't mean hearing something or someone, it has to mean expecting something or someone. Whether resonating from battlefield or grave, community center or margin, the "Silence" and the silenced voice of radical belonging will discourage and haunt us until it's not only "uttered" to our ears but echoed by and with us – and then ever listened for with all our senses and exchanged in all our echoes.

Across this chapter, Dickinson echoes and echoes with a range of others in pieces about death, boys, and nature, and in each category respectively, the earthen citizenship that Dickinson shares with them is determined by common space, by sensory contact, and then by both common space and sensory contact.²⁸ Each determiner of citizenship poses different challenges to the earthen citizen's democratizing voice. In Dickinson's elegies beginning "More Life – went out" and "A Coffin – is a small Domain," citizenship is determined by common space. Dickinson echoes the "Tract of Citizen" who complies with the authorized state of national belonging over the acoustic state of radical belonging and she echoes the "Citizen of Paradise" who is deceased, but any exchanges of a democratizing voice between subjects get masked or silenced by the various powers that overlap with the earthen citizens' common space. In the boy poem beginning

“He told a homely tale” and the scrap of fragments labelled AC 887, citizenship is determined by moments of sensory contact. When Dickinson echoes an orphaned “Barefoot Citizen” and the “little Citizen” who is her nephew Gilbert, the democratizing voice exchanged between them fleets even as it fades without the seeming permanence of the democratic Voice it might rival. Finally, in the poems beginning “A Saucer holds a Cup,” “Nature affects to be sedate,” “The Bird did prance,” and “Who occupies this House,” citizenship is determined by ongoing sensory contact at and with the common space of earth. Under these conditions, it might seem like the democratizing voice exchanged between earthen citizens has its best chance of not only surviving but thriving, but as Dickinson echoes winged creatures, the unobservable forces of nature, dwellers of an unimagined “Republic of Delight,” and inhabitants of a town formerly populated by ghosts and squirrels, this voice becomes less and less perfectly translatable. When Dickinson’s transplantation of citizenship encounters the limit of this voice’s translatability, the listening that she uses to hear and expect them strains. This limit becomes uniquely sharable in her poems about the earth though. Concluding with them, this chapter will trace the democratizing voice of earthen citizens to the hospitality located not in the home where we’re empowered to listen, but in the earth where we’ve already been and are still being heard.

Elegized Citizens:

“Her conscientious Voice will soar ummoved”²⁹

Because citizenship is determined by common space in the poems beginning “More Life – went out” and “A Coffin – is a small Domain,” the democratizing voice exchanged by earthen citizens gets inevitably masked and silenced by the power dynamics overlapping their acoustic

state of radical belonging. In the former poem written around 1862, Dickinson elegizes the national citizens who reject or mask the democratizing voice that exposes the issue of slavery in America, which she refers to as the “The Ethiop within.” The only end punctuation in the poem follows this phrase, guaranteeing that an elegy for national citizens rejecting or masking this democratizing voice with their own democratic Voice is also an elegy for the earthen citizens impacted by them, especially slaves themselves. The elegy centers on the phrase referring to them, with whom the exchange of a democratizing voice should begin rather than be obstructed. Stuck listening to the rejection and masking of this democratizing voice by the democratic Voice of a national citizen, Dickinson describes him exhaling not just “Ordinary Breath” but “Life” itself, and so she defines him not just as cold but as possessing “A Power of Renowned Cold.”

The poem reads:

More Life – went out – when / He went

Than Ordinary Breath –

Lit with a finer Phosphor –

Requiring in the Quench –

A Power of Renowned Cold,

The Climate of the Grave

A Temperature just adequate

So Anthracite, to live –

For some – an Ampler Zero –

A Frost more needle keen

Is necessary, to reduce
The Ethiop within.

Others – extinguish easier –
A Gnat's minutest Fan
Sufficient to obliterate
A Tract of Citizen –

Whose Peat life – amply / vivid –
Ignores the solemn News
That Popocatapel exists –
Or Etna's Scarlets, Choose –³⁰

Dickinson shudders to think of the national citizens who reject or mask the democratizing voice that exposes the issue of slavery, and while she likens their coldness to “An Ampler Zero - / A Frost more needle keen,” she does not ignore the fact that some of these national citizens are not actually so cold at all. Some of them are simply complicit with the coldest of the cold, and they seem to disturb Dickinson even more because they “extinguish” even “easier” and, with what she calls a “minutest Fan,” seemingly brush off this democratizing voice as they would a “Gnat.” Still, Dickinson elegizes all these national citizens because the part of them that is also an earthen citizen – what she calls the “Tract of Citizen” – has been “obliterate[d],” and they will not participate in the acoustic state of radical belonging that would include them, nor will they listen to and perhaps echo and echo with the democratizing voice that discloses the “solemn News” of slavery as metaphorized in the explosive existence of volcanos like “Popocatapel” and

“Etna.” As national citizens only, they speak over that democratizing voice with their own democratic Voice. Because they are seemingly dead to Dickinson and the earthen citizens that could use their solidarity, Dickinson elegizes them. The last stanza classifies the obliterated citizen as one whose “Whose Peat life” ignores slavery, but because the final word is “Choose” followed by a dash, the last stanza also asks readers to classify themselves either as national citizens who will do the same or earthen citizens who will hear – and maybe even echo or echo with – the democratizing voice issuing from the acoustic state of radical belonging even when, recalling the poem about silence in the earth, it is discouraging and haunting.

In Dickinson’s citizen elegies, earthen citizenship determined by common space is problematic because if the democratizing voice of such citizenship is not compromised by the encroachment of the democratic Voice of national citizenship, it will be limited by the boundaries of mortality. In the poem beginning, “A Coffin – is a small Domain,” Dickinson wants to use her democratizing voice to echo a deceased “Citizen of Paradise,” but the citizen’s absence in death leaves her nothing to echo but the grave that Dickinson animates and the memories that she replays. The poem reads:

A Coffin – is a small / Domain,

Yet able to contain

A +Citizen of Paradise

In it's diminished Plane –

A Grave – is +a restricted / Breadth –

Yet ampler than the Sun –

And all the Seas / He populates –

And Lands He looks upon

To Him who on it's / +small Repose

+Bestows a single Friend –

Circumference without Relief –

Or Estimate – or End –

+a Rudiment +an inferior

+low +conferred –³¹

Dickinson echoes the grave as “ampler” than the “Sun,” “Seas,” and “Lands” because it contains the body of the deceased, but beyond the grave, Dickinson can only echo this “Citizen” or, per her variant, “Rudiment” of “Paradise” in her memory. At this point, the elegy that is supposed to be for the deceased becomes an elegy for Dickinson and anyone mourning with her in the space once common with the departed citizen who can no longer be heard nor echoed with a democratizing voice. Unable to stop listening for the deceased, mourners are destined to the silent “Circumference without Relief – / Or Estimate – or End.” Alexandra Socarides finds a tension between the elegy’s generic requirement for closure and Dickinson’s resistance to that closure, especially at the level of her fascicle structure, as it extends time and space to engage repetitions and variations that deny return and obstruct consolation (80). In the case of Dickinson’s citizen elegies, these repetitions and variations follow the limit of the democratizing voice as it can be “Choose[n]” in the poem beginning “More Life – went out” but only remembered in the poem beginning “A Coffin – is a small Domain.” The elegies are not unrelated in that a democratizing voice must be chosen if it is to be remembered.

Another nineteenth-century American writer interested in attuning national citizens to a more democratizing voice so that it might be both chosen and remembered is Emerson. In “The Poet” and “Friendship,” essays expository of their titles, he invites citizens to inhabit common spaces as listening rather than speaking subjects.³² In “The Poet,” he cautions the “complacent citizen” against perplexity when his beloved city doesn’t impress the country-boy, and he encourages that citizen to listen to the boy instead of expressing disregard (*Essays: Second Series* 14). Doing so actually puts the citizen in touch with what, in Dickinson’s work, is the democratizing voice exchangeable between earthen citizens. Emerson writes:

It is not that he [the country-boy] does not see all the fine houses, and know that he never saw such before, but he disposes of them as easily as the poet finds place for the railway. The chief value of the new fact, is to enhance the great and constant fact of Life, which can dwarf any and every circumstance, and to which the belt of wampum, and the commerce of America, are alike.” (*Essays: Second Series* 24)

In a move that connects listening by the citizen to listening by the friend in “Friendship,” Emerson cautions the friend against the form of speech that entails performing one’s social status in front of one another, and he invites that friend into the form of listening that entails remaining “alert and inventive” to the real needs of one another (*Essays: First Series* 155). Just when it might seem like such listening is less spectacular or fun than the speaking that is social performance, it can yet “add rhyme and reason to what was drudgery” (*Essays: First Series* 155). In a move akin to Dickinson’s transplantation of citizenship in the earth, Emerson asserts that friendship “must plant itself on the ground, before it vaults over the moon” (*Essays: First Series* 154). Again associating citizenship with listening instead of speaking, Emerson says that he desires for friendship “to be a little of a citizen, before it is quite a cherub,” and he goes on to

celebrate the citizen who “we chide” for making “love” in this case, and by extension the democratizing voice in Dickinson’s case, a “commodity” (*Essays: First Series* 154). To

Emerson, the citizen’s love is:

an exchange of gifts, of useful loans; it is good neighborhood; it watches with the sick; it holds the pall at the funeral; and quite loses site of the delicacies and nobility of relation. . . . We are to dignify to each other the daily needs and offices of man’s life, and embellish it by courage, wisdom and unity. (*Essays: First Series* 154)

In the spirit of Emerson’s essays, Dickinson’s poems that escape elegy address the stakes of hearing, echoing, and echoing with the democratizing voice, which in Emerson’s case is love, that is exchangeable between earthen citizens not only in spaces that are common with one another but in moments of sensory contact with others who are othered.

Little Citizens:

“The pomp – the court – the etiquette – they are of the earth”³³

Because citizenship is determined by moments of sensory contact in the poem beginning “He told a homely tale” and the document of fragments labelled AC 887, the democratizing voice exchangeable between earthen citizens is neither masked nor silenced as it is when citizenship is determined by common space, but it is painfully temporary and does not quite rival the longevity associated with the democratic Voice of national belonging. In the poem beginning “He told a homely tale,” Dickinson echoes the story of an orphan boy whose own sensory contact with the world includes his brush with the poet to whom he tells his tale as well as a “flake of snow,” a “Redbreast of the Barn,” and the wintered earth.³⁴ Although he shares earthen

citizenship with everyone and everything that he touches, any exchanges of a democratizing voice between him and fellow earthen citizens do not save him from homelessness. The poem reads:

He told a homely tale
 And spotted it with tears –
 Opon his infant face was / set
 The Cicatrice of years –

All crumpled was the cheek
 No other kiss had known
 Than flake of snow, +divided with
 +The Redbreast of the Barn –

If Mother – in the Grave –
 Or Father – on the Sea –
 Or Father in the Firmament –
 Or Bretheren, had he –

If Commonwealth below,
 Or Commonwealth above

Have +missed a Barefoot
 Citizen –

+I've ransomed it – alive –

[page break]

+imprinted swift +When hurrying

to the town +lost

+I've found it – 'tis alive –³⁵

As Dickinson echoes the story of this boy, she wonders whether he was abandoned by a dead mother or seafaring father or whether he wandered beyond the purviews of God or kin, and she qualifies his estrangement with if's and or's that can't confirm where he came from or where he'll go next. After having acknowledged what and who is temporarily present in the boy's life, Dickinson lists what and who appears to be long absent from it – mother, father, Father, brethren, and commonwealths below and above. The list inflects Dickinson's relief at his survival with sympathy. Like his fleeting moments of contact with Dickinson herself, the snow, the bird, and the earth, Dickinson's final descriptor for him is only temporarily compensatory. He is "alive," but the poem's end dash and lack of closure render the democratizing voice used to convey his tale rather inconsequential.

Whether earthen citizenship is determined by either common space or sensory contact, the democratizing voice exchangeable in an acoustic state of radical belonging doesn't get the momentum it needs to attract more listeners and echoers. In document AC 887, Dickinson composes a series of at least three texts that find her listening to, echoing, and echoing with this voice as it circulates through a variety of earthen citizens.³⁶ Across the long horizontally-shaped piece of wrapping paper, the trace of this voice through each text seemingly cries out for an earthen citizenship determined by both common space and sensory contact. The most immediately available text, is perhaps, the draft message to her nephew Gilbert. It acknowledges

a bond of citizenship between a woman and a boy based on the common space of the earth and their constant shared contact with it, and the democratizing voice exchanged between them is signified in the content of the message by its suggested inclusion of a flower that is now lost. The text reads: “With the trust that the / little Citizen is already / a patriot I send him / the national Colors / or such of them as / I can find for hues / just now are few – / so minute a Veteran / will possibly / Excuse them –”.³⁷

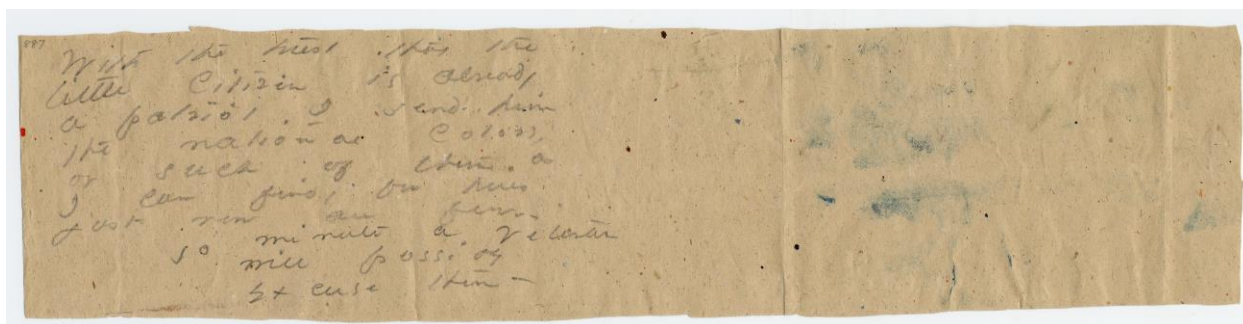


Fig. 1. AC 887, Courtesy of the Amherst College Archives and Special Collections.

As earthen citizens sharing an acoustic state of radical belonging, Dickinson and Gilbert share a democratizing voice that is signified by national colors that are any hue of the earth at any moment as it provides their common space and constant sensory contact. Even if a veteran of the authorized state excuses these hues’ deviation from red, white, and blue, an earthen citizen like Gilbert – a “little Citizen” and “already a patriot” – will hear, echo, and echo with them just as Dickinson does. The whimsy of the note seeps into the text on the left side of the document’s verso: “Is not the Election / of a Daphne much / more / more signal than / that of a President – / for Beauty needs no / Magistrate and / Ecstasy is its only / mob – is a hushed / mob.”

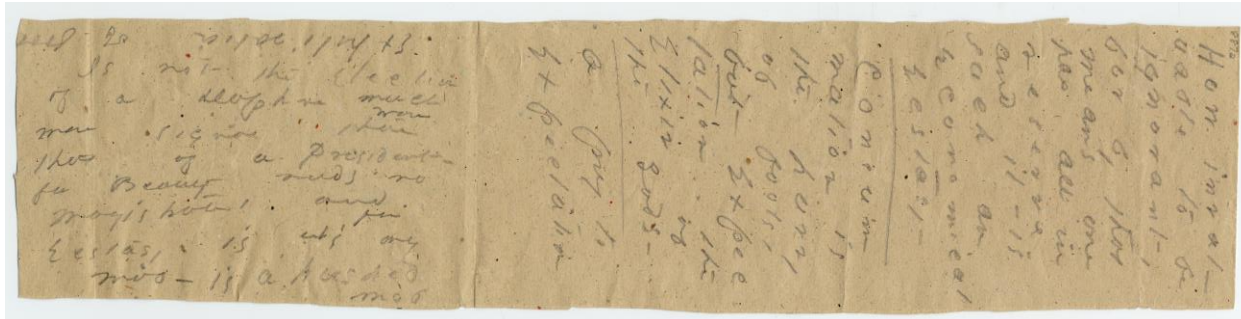


Fig. 2. AC 887 a, Courtesy of the Amherst College Archives and Special Collections.

In document's second text, the democratizing voice exchangeable between Dickinson and Gilbert as earthen citizens in an acoustic state of radical belonging becomes exchangeable between them and the daphne whose election by blooming is "more signal" of their democratizing voice than the election of a "President," which would only signal the democratic Voice of citizens with full national belonging. Like the echo that "has no Magistrate" in the introduction to this dissertation, the "Beauty" of the democratizing voice circulating between earthen citizens "needs / no Magistrate" except the "Ecstasy" that is a "hushed – mob" – hushed, no doubt, because its earthen citizens are listening rather speaking. Because the daphne chosen to represent the democratizing voice of these earthen citizens is a non-native flower, it suggests that the transplantation of citizenship from the state to the earth might be successful, and this is likely the flower enclosed with a fine-copy of the message to Gilbert.

The democratizing voice that circulates through these messages and that hushes to hear more earthen citizens meets its match in the document's third text though. If we turn the page containing the "Election / of a Daphne" counterclockwise by ninety degrees, like an hour-arm going back to noon, then the "Ecstasy" of listening for and echoing this democratizing voice is masked the "Ecstasy" of ignorance in what seems to be a democratic Voice. The text reads:

"How inval – / uable to be / ignorant – / for by that / means one / has all in / reserve / and it is / such an / Economical / Ecstasy –".³⁸ If the ecstasy of earthen citizens is one of listening for and

echoing a democratizing voice, then the “Economical Ecstasy” of someone who is likely not an earthen citizen is, likely, the ecstasy of a national citizen who is speaking with a democratic Voice. In fact, Dickinson may well be referring to the citizen with full national belonging who is tasked with using a democratic Voice to preserve the three features of citizenship discussed above with a kind of “ignorance,” “reserve,” and “Economical Ecstasy.” After the horizontal line drawn below this text, Dickinson completes her comparison between the ecstasy of each kind of citizen. She writes: “Consum / mation is / the hurry / of fools – / but Expec / tation the / Elixer of / the Gods –.” If Dickinson is making a comparison between the ecstasy of speaking for a national citizen and the ecstasy of listening for an earthen citizen, then she is also making a distinction between the affordances of their [v]oices. Because of the exclusions of national citizenship, the democratic Voice thrives on the consummation of what or who is other, but because of the inclusions of earthen citizenship, the democratizing voice thrives on listening that doesn’t just hear what or who is other but also expects what or who is other. The comparison would clarify the upside-down script above the text about the election of a daphne that says “Exhilaration [sic]”: “Exhilaration of fool.” Just masking the democratizing voice of earthen citizens who are listening with exhilaration in a hushed mob is the democratic Voice of national citizens who are speaking with exhilaration in a real mob.

The democratizing voice circulating through all the poems above as well as the texts on document AC 887 is tasked with surviving in common spaces encroached by the power dynamics of authorized states and time itself, and it is tasked with surviving through and across moments of sensory contact. Elegizing the loss of earthen citizens to authorized states and death is elegizing the limit of the democratizing voice in those common spaces. And worrying over the homelessness of the barefoot citizen with a good story and the hushed mob of little citizens

masked by national ones is worrying over the limit of the democratizing voice in those moments of sensory contact. If this democratizing voice is to survive, then the earthen citizenship that lends this voice circulation must be determined by both the common space and the consistent sensory contact provided by the earth. In document A 887, the term that speaks to this solution is “expectation.” If a catalyst for all the texts across this document is the blooming and gifting of a flower, then “expectation” precedes not only the voice that circulates across this page and not only the listening that heard it before echoing it but also the listening that expected it before hearing it at all. We can’t just listen and echo one another in the spaces and moments that make us earthen citizens, we must always be listening for what we don’t even realize we might hear and what we don’t even realize we must echo – the flower that blooms from the seed we planted and one that appears from out of nowhere. The citizenship determined by the common space and constant sensory contact provided by the earth turns us not just into subjects who listen to what we hear but subjects who listen to expect what we don’t hear yet. “Expectation,” what Dickinson calls the “Elixer of the Gods,” unfolds in listening, and it keeps the democratic voice alive by always trying to hear it anywhere and everywhere. An earthen citizen is a listener as well as a “a prey to / Expectation,” the last phrase in document AC 887 when it is vertically aligned. Just off the center of the page, this phrase *is the off center* around which all the document’s fragments relate.³⁹ A prey to “Expectation” is a listener ready to hear and echo the democratizing voice even when caught off guard, off center, off listening to anything in particular.

Each Citizen:

“The Seasons – shift – my Picture”⁴⁰

In Dickinson's poems about human and nonhuman nature, citizenship is determined by both the common space as well as constant sensory contact provided by the earth. Earthen citizens include Dickinson herself as well as winged creatures, the unseen forces of nature, dwellers of an imagined "Republic of Delight" and inhabitants of a town formerly populated by ghosts and squirrels. A democratizing voice circulates between them when they listen, echo, and echo with one another, and even when they don't hear one other, they still expect to hear another anyway. Despite this ideal acoustic state of radical belonging, the constancy of it means that earthen citizens encounter problems translating the democratizing voice issuing from other earthen citizens and having their own such voice translated as well. The poem beginning "A Saucer holds a Cup" is both a picture of earthen citizenship inclusive of subjects with human and nonhuman natures and a social allegory about the degree to which the democratizing voice that might circulate between them is and is not translatable. The poem reads:

A Saucer holds a / Cup

In sordid human Life

But in a Squirrel's / estimate

A Saucer holds a Loaf -

A Table of a Tree

Demands the little King [“my” under “the”]

And every Breeze / that run along

His Dining Room do swing - [“th” under “do”]

His Cutlery – he keeps

/ that flies,” which, she writes, “Is heartier than we” and has, per her variant, “more integrity.” The canceled variants, “Dear friend” and “You,” emphasize the intact “Citizen” phrase, which leaves readers anticipating how the democratizing voice of earthen citizenship, and items emblematic of it, will circulate next.

The poem beginning “Nature affects to be sedate” offers another picture of earthen citizenship inclusive of subjects with human and nonhuman natures as well as another social allegory about the degree to which the democratizing voice that might circulate between them is and is not translatable. Impressions instead of items are exchanged between human and nonhuman worlds, and like the items in the poem above, these impressions are also emblematic of the democratizing voice of earthen citizenship. Instead of a distinction between use and novelty value though, this allegory makes a distinction between the observational and epistemological value of these impressions and, thus, of the voice that they emblemize. The poem reads:

Nature affects to be / sedate	[“was known” under “affects”]
Opon Occasion, grand	
But let our observation / shut	[“halt” beside “shut”]
Her practises extend	[“qualities” under “practices”]
To Necromancy and the	
	[page break]
Trades	
Remote to understand	[“astute” then “obscure” under “Remote”]
Behold our spacious / Citizen	[“my” then “this” under “our”]
Unto a Juggler turned – ⁴²	

As nature unfolds in this poem, Dickinson listens to and echoes the impressions that it makes on earthen citizens who are human. In the first two lines, she echoes the observational value of nature's impressions as "sedate" and "grand," and in the rest of the poem, she echoes the epistemological value of nature's impressions as they become "practices" or, per Dickinson's variant, "qualities" that "extend / To Necromancy and the // Trades." Whether nature's impressions remain impressions or become practices and qualities, nature's unfolding will remain "Remote to understand," but the observational value of these impressions keeps earthen citizens listening to nature as "our spacious Citizen," and the epistemological value of these impressions-turned-practices or impressions-turned-qualities shifts these citizens' listening into speaking of nature as "a Juggler turned."⁴³ From this picture of earthen citizenship comes Dickinson's social allegory about the virtue of esteeming observational value over epistemological value not just for the impressions exchanged between earthen citizens but the democratizing voice that might be exchanged between them too. Again, Dickinson burdens humans with the need to distinguish observational from epistemological value because otherwise, the "spacious Citizen" that is nature is reduced to, even masked as, a "Juggler" by the human subjects incapable of translating it correctly because they have become too eager to talk. Dickinson closes the poem with this masking to make an example out of it, one that should reinforce why, in moments of translation, the democratizing voice of earthen citizenship begs more for listening than the echo that mistranslates what it hears – the echo that is really an Echo.

What is, perhaps, the loveliest picture of earthen citizenship materializes in the poem beginning "The Bird did prance – the Bee did play," wherein the democratizing voice of earthen citizenship is effortlessly exchangeable and desirable in its acoustic state of radical belonging, but it is also incapable of officializing this state into a "Republic" anywhere beyond a "thought,"

and so it is in Dickinson's thought that this voice articulates this dream – one more earthen than American. The poem reads:

The Bird did prance – the / Bee did play –

The Sun ran miles / away

So blind with joy he could / not choose “~~full of~~” under “blind with”

Between his Holiday - “the” under “his”

The morn was up – the / meadows out

The Fences all but ran

Republic of Delight, I / thought

Where each is Citizen –

From Heavy laden Lands / to thee [“Climes” above “Lands”]

Were seas to cross / to come

A Caspian were / crowded –

Too near thou art for Fame –⁴⁴ [“close” under “near”]

When Dickinson echoes the prancing “Bird,” playing “Bee,” and running “Sun,” she also imagines the “Sun” being so “blind with joy” that he cannot decide where to shine his light nor where to holiday. The acoustic state of radical belonging is one of persistent light and holidaying that carries over into the second stanza, where the “morn” and “meadows” are so spectacular that Dickinson finds herself imagining the dissolution of all borders when she suggests that the “Fences all but ran.” After weaving between her acoustic state of radical belonging and her thought, the democratizing voice of earthen citizenship remains in her thought for the rest of the

poem, where it can officialize this acoustic state into a “Republic.” She writes: “Republic of Delight, I / thought / Where each is Citizen.” The cross of each “t” in “thought” is one long pencil stroke that underlines “Republic,” emphasizing that this republic exists only in her thought. Dickinson calls attention to this line in an earlier version of this poem too, where she has penciled and cancelled the line “What hindered me” above the phrase “Republic of Delight.” The democratizing voice of earthen citizenship may be exchangeable and desirable in her acoustic state of radical belonging, but it does not translate into anything authorized or official anywhere else beyond her thoughts.

The last stanza speaks to the voice of earthen citizenship as one that rings in every emigrant’s thought. It is in one’s thoughts that this voice construes an acoustic state of radical belonging into a possible reality or “Republic,” which can compel one to leave “Heavy laden Lands” and cross seas to find it. As Dickinson’s last line indicates though, there is no need to travel far for a dream that is actually near – “too near” even “for Fame.” In the earlier draft of this poem, Dickinson follows the line “From Heavy laden Lands” with three additional lines that she also cancels out: “As Emigrants we come / Or pass too uncertain / Passengers.”⁴⁵ These lines convey how the democratizing voice in the emigrant’s thought or dream becomes less and less real along the path towards it in reality. If this voice is what makes the emigrant an emigrant, its imperfect translatability beyond thought and dream is what makes the emigrant a “too uncertain / Passenger.” Together, the versions of this poem reinforce how, despite the transplantation of citizenship into the earth and of the emigrant in America, the democratizing voice that they share cannot translate any acoustic state of radical belonging into a real “Republic.” Its officialization remains a “thought” that is “Too near” for actual “Fame.” Dickinson doesn’t offer solutions to the translation issues that prevent the democratizing voice of earthen citizenship from being able

to officialize a republic. If anything, the non-officiality of an acoustic state of radical belonging is also the very intimacy of its earthen citizenship. In the poem beginning “Who occupies this House,” Dickinson describes a town that used to be a “Territory for the Ghosts / And Squirrels” before it became an authorized state with a capitol “Distinguished for the gravity / Of every Citizen —”.⁴⁶ Because the citizens are strangers though, what Dickinson has really described is a town that used to be an acoustic state of radical belonging for squirrels and other earthen citizens who are now ghosts – citizens of paradise who, from graves and memories, call for elegy.

Earthen Citizen:

“And what indeed is Earth but a Nest, from whose rim we are all falling?”⁴⁷

As the democratizing voice of earthen citizenship remains exchangeable though imperfectly translatable between more and more earthen citizens – human and nonhuman, near and far, heard and anticipated, echoed and echoing – in an acoustic state of radical belonging, so this voice also falls short of officializing, by perfect translation, that very state. If the exchangeability of this voice favors inclusivity, any officiality of it would come with the threat of exclusivity. Because nothing and nobody can discern *everything* conveyed in this voice, anyone or anything using it sincerely, and it can only be used sincerely, ends up echoing and echoing with one another. If the “Republic” they might have each dreamed up is too near for fame, then the earth is not, and the earth is what provides the common ground and constant sensory contact that determines their citizenship in the first place. From the impossibility of a republic to the hospitality of the earth, the “strange Fame” of an unofficial acoustic state of radical belonging will keep the democratizing voice of Dickinson’s earthen citizenship in

circulation. Like the short poem below, this voice will be “Gathered into the Earth,” “out of story,” “Gathered to that strange Fame,” and to a ‘lonesome Glory.’” The poem reads:

Gathered into the Earth,
 And out of story –
 Gathered to that / strange Fame –
 That lonesome Glory
 That hath no omen / here – but Awe –⁴⁸

If we let this poem refer to the democratizing voice of Dickinson’s earthen citizenship, it is a voice that comes with no omen “but Awe.” The awe may begin when we hear this voice, continue when we echo it, and peak when we echo with it, but it sustains because we constantly expect to hear it and use it in the face of what or who is other. When we constantly expect to hear and use this democratizing voice, we know that listening to one another is not an empowered act of hospitality likened to opening our homes as hosts. Instead, it is a reciprocal act likened to the hospitality of having been heard and of currently being heard as guests of the earth. At its best, the home is our attempt at an official state of radical belonging when, as Jacques Derrida argues the earth, not the home, is the province of all hospitality because it “gives hospitality before all else” (*Adieu* 93).⁴⁹ Every act of hospitality is inscribed with the host’s “recollection” of having been the other or guest and the host’s “welcome” of the other or guest (36). Because the home is simply a response and end to “wandering,” the host is an “emigrant, exile, stranger, a guest” from the beginning (56). The democratizing voice of an earthen citizen comes with no omen but awe because it will resonate with the memory of ever having been and the privilege of ever still being a guest of the earth.

Read through the hospitality of our status as guests of the earth rather than hosts in the home, the democratic voice of Dickinson's earthen citizenship can't help but block the officialization of acoustic states of radical belonging. It can, however, still speak to other modes of citizenship. In particular, it might speak to the unwritten supplement to the law of national citizenship that is, according to Gregg Lambert by way of Immanuel Kant, world citizenship, which promises a right to hospitality through both "association" and "communication (linguistically, but also through travel)," a right that keeps national borders porous even if patrolled (30). Not unlike earthen citizenship, world citizenship is ideal in theory, but most of its common space is territorialized by official states who interpret world citizenship as a guest-host relationship between humans, wherein the human institution is always the host. By extension, even in the extra-territorial and uninhabitable spaces that are not territorialized, world citizenship becomes interpretable as a non-guest-non-host relationship that is still between humans and enabled by human technology and commerce.⁵⁰ Because world citizenship assigns the host and non-host roles to humans instead of the earth or metamorphic zone, the voice exchangeable through it misuses hospitality and risks hostility. Though it may sound like a democratizing voice, it is likely a democratic Voice. That democratizing voice can only circulate for citizens whose listening is humbled not empowered by the hospitality located in the earth rather than the home or even the nation.

If Levinas and Derrida align this hospitality with perception of the other in the face as it might overcome any subject-object relation or included-excluded status, then Dickinson's poems remind us that this face might be human, nonhuman, nonliving, and especially earthen. In all facing, we can use the democratizing voice of earthen citizenship to enact reciprocal not empowered hospitality. We can do so because every use of our democratizing voice is an act that

echoes the hospitality extended to us by the earth. In Dickinson's poem beginning "He was my host," Dickinson shows us how this voice is not transmitted to us from the earth but always reverberating between us:

He was my host – he was my guest,
 I never to this day
 If I invited him could tell,
 Or he invited me.

So infinite our intercourse	"interview" is a variant for "intercourse"
So intimate, indeed,	
Analysis as capsule seemed	"like" is a variant for "as"
To keeper of the seed. ⁵¹	

As the democratizing voice of earthen citizenship reverberates between Dickinson and the earth as "infinite[ly]" and "intimate[ly]" as it does for the hushed mob of earthen in citizens in document AC 887, this reverberation itself becomes the hushed non-origin of all radical belonging. Read through Levinas and Derrida, this voice's reverberation in the earth is like a call from infinity that Dickinson accepts by not only echoing it – but by echoing to hear it, echoing with it, and echoing to expect to hear it. Every poem might be an echo of it. Derrida explains: "It is necessary to begin by responding. There would thus be, in the beginning, no first word. The call is called only from the response. The response comes ahead of or comes to encounter the call, which, before the response, is first only in order to await the response that makes it come" (*Adieu* 24). When Dickinson names human, nonhuman, and nonliving subjects "citizens" in her poems, it is actually a response to hearing or expecting to hear them in the first place and to their

possible call, sometimes masked and sometimes silent, in the second place. “The most important population,” she writes in the poem beginning with that very line, “Unnoticed dwell.”⁵² Even if the acoustic state of radical belonging created and sustained by their democratizing voice cannot be officialized by that voice, it is a more inclusive state for this very reason.

Chapter Two: Later than Light, Prior to Speaking

Air has no Residence, / no Neighbor,

No Ear, no Door,

No Apprehension of / Another

Oh, Happy Air!

Ethereal Guest at / e'en an Outcast's Pillow -

Essential Host, in / Life's faint, wailing / Inn,

Later than Light / thy Consciousness accost / Me

Till it depart, / +persuading Mine –

Line 8: +convincing

-Emily Dickinson⁵³

Introduction

“The Face we choose to miss –”⁵⁴

As Dickinson listened within the large acoustic state of radical belonging explored in chapter one of this dissertation, she came face to face with the variety of subjects gathered in it, notably the earth itself. As significant as it was for her to come face to face with the earth in the poems that closed that chapter, it is just significant for her to come face to face with the air in the

poem that starts this chapter, the one in the epigraph that begins “Air has no Residence.”

Dickinson is not alone in pondering what it’s like to face the air. In nineteenth-century American literature, she is joined by Emerson and Melville in *Nature* and *Moby-Dick; Or, the Whale* respectively. All these writers suggest that the role we adopt while facing the air determines how, based on the echo that unfolds in the moment of facing, we conceive of consciousness as either shared or sovereign. If we adopt the role of a listening subject, we gain the opportunity to echo the moment of facing and access a consciousness that is not only shared with the air but capable of transforming our sense of ourselves and verifying our embodied being. If we adopt the role of a speaking subject, however, we may end up making the air into a signal of a consciousness that is sovereign to us – an echo of us – and in doing so we become capable of continually upholding our sense of ourselves and verifying our cognitive Being.

This association of consciousness with the listening and speaking subjects who face the air in nineteenth-century American literature bears the impact of British physicist John Tyndall. In transatlantic journal articles and public lectures, he urges his audiences to face the air materially by imagining what it’s like to follow sound and light waves. In a discourse titled, “On the Scientific Use of the Imagination,” delivered to the British Association at Liverpool in 1870 and then printed in *Appleton’s Journal* and elsewhere, Tyndall repeats his career-long commitment to the utility of the imagination in following these waves. He argues that the imagination can pick up where the senses leave off in conceptualizing the sound and light waves in the air so that thinking about their “condensations and rarefactions” can lead to believing “as firmly in their existence as in that of the air itself” (“On the Scientific” 8). Comprehending light waves requires more imaginative work than comprehending sound waves though, since following the latter waves leads to a “definite tangible, vibrating body” like vocal chords, organ-

pipes, or strings (Tyndall, “On the Scientific” 11). If we follow sound waves, we may find sound makers who possess consciousness, and any sound wave itself may end up resonantly tracing the consciousness we share with other listeners following along too. If nobody seems to be around, we may even find ourselves in a dynamic connection with the air that we’re facing and the sound, or any sound, resonantly tracing the consciousness that we share with the air. Ultimately, following sound waves shows us how listening to them may expose our shared consciousness. Following light waves, however, leads us to something more abstract. “Ask your imagination,” insists Tyndall, “if it will accept a vibrating multiple proportion – a numerical ratio in a state of oscillation? I do not think it will” (“On the Scientific” 11). If we follow light waves, we are conceptually met with “a particle of vibrating matter quite as definite, though it may be excessively minute, as that which gives origin to a musical sound. Such a particle we name an atom or a molecule” (Tyndall, “On the Scientific” 12). Because we can’t apprehend this source with the naked eye, Tyndall encourages us to imagine it.⁵⁵ Imagining this source means letting our imagination speak for it, and we may find ourselves forming a delightful connection with a source that we’ve turned into a signal of the sovereign consciousness that, through imagination, spoke for it. Ultimately, following light waves shows us how imagining them may expose our sovereign consciousness.

When Dickinson faces not only the air but any other human, nonhuman, or nonliving subject, she is, unequivocally, a listener, so when she faces the air, she experiences what is the aural equivalent of eye contact, which, because it’s aural rather than visual, exceeds the two-way nature of eye contact. This aural equivalent of eye contact is the dynamic connection between Dickinson, the air, and whatever it is that they both hear, which will eventually become a resonant trace of their shared consciousness. For example, in the poem beginning “Air has no

Residence” from the epigraph above, Dickinson comes face to face with the air, and in their first dynamic connection, the both hear the “Outcast’s Pillow” and, and in their second dynamic connection, they both hear the “faint, wailing Inn” of “Life.” On their own, the moments of facing in each dynamic connection are touching, even beautiful. In the first one, Dickinson aligns with the “Outcast,” the air is her “Guest,” and the “Pillow” is the resonant meeting point for her listening ear and the listening air. In the second one, Dickinson aligns with the guest, the air is the “Essential Host,” and the “faint, wailing / Inn” of Life is the resonant meeting point for her traveling ear and the travelled air.

When Dickinson echoes these moments of facing though, they become so much more than touching or beautiful encounters, because then, she accesses the shared consciousness as it is resonantly traced through them. Granted, Dickinson’s access to this shared consciousness cannot be perfectly pinpointed in the dynamic connection between her, the air, and the resonance that they hear. Even so, *when* she echoes the moment of facing, that resonance – pillow or wailing inn – becomes the trace of *shared consciousness* as it must have “accost[ed]” her and either “persuade[d]” or, per Dickinson’s variant, “convey[ed]” her *to echo*. It’s likely that shared consciousness “accosts” her like the “something” that seemingly overtakes her mind in document AC 879, which reads: “A something / over takes the / mind – we do / not hear it / coming.”⁵⁶ With that accosting, shared consciousness also persuades or conveys her to echo, initially, by transforming her sense of herself and verifying her embodied being. Thereafter, she may echo by speaking. Most importantly, this shared consciousness only emerges as that which accosted her and thus persuaded or conveyed her to echo once it becomes traceable in the echo of her facing – a delay, however slight, that Dickinson renders with the phrase “Later than Light.”

Notably, the echo in this chapter doesn’t have to be audible. Initially, Dickinson’s

inaudible echo of facing is a transformation – an orientation back, and thereafter, her audible echo of facing might be spoken – a speaking back. Dickinson’s inaudible echo precedes any audible echo because her status as a listener in the face of the air gives her the chance to access consciousness not as something sovereign that emerges, as Levinas would say, in “correlation with a theme” but as something shared that originates in her subjectivity as it exists prior to correlation with anything – even the sounds that, “Later than Light,” will trace the consciousness that she shares with air or any other subject (*Otherwise* 25). In *Otherwise than Being*, Levinas describes this subjectivity as something that connects what is similar to and other than the subject, that precedes the “exhibition” of the other, and that also precedes consciousness itself (25). In Dickinson’s poem, this subjectivity is something that connects her, the air, and the resonance they hear; that precedes the air becoming either a guest or a host only (it is both); and that precedes the shared consciousness that will yet accost Dickinson. This subjectivity works, explains Levinas, like an “allegiance,” or a “knot,” that ties the same to the other in responsibility “as a response to his proximity before any question” (*Otherwise* 24). He goes on: “In this responsibility the latent birth of consciousness itself as a perception or listening in to being, can be surprised, and [can] dialogue based on questioning” (*Otherwise* 24-25). In the poem above, Dickinson is surprised by her dynamic connection with the air and the resonances that are traces of their shared consciousness. Her feeling of responsibility for rather than recognition of the air onsets the latent birth of her shared consciousness once, “Later than Light,” she realizes how it accosted and persuaded or conveyed her to inaudibly echo this moment of facing by transforming her sense of herself and verifying her embodied being.

Dickinson’s inaudible echo is what Levinas would call the “saying” or “communication as exposure” (*Otherwise* 48). Any audible echo that might follow this inaudible echo, even the

poem itself, is what Levinas would call the “said” or the “echo of the saying, whose signification cannot be assembled” (*Otherwise* 48, 27). The inaudible echo that is a transformation, though, makes her capable of the audible echo that is speaking in this poem and, beyond it, in any moment when speaking might become necessary. If she cannot or should not echo by speaking, she is always echoing by transforming for the moment when she can or should echo by speaking. Because the inaudible echo transforms her sense of herself and verifies embodied being, it often mends the disembodied features across her work – like the face, brain, and heart – by re-embodiment to and for her embodied being. Their disembodiment seeks and finds re-embodiment not by accessing the sovereign consciousness that upholds her sense of herself and verifies her cognitive Being. In fact, such sovereign consciousness may prove to have been the intellectual cause of disembodiment in the first place. Instead, their disembodiment seeks and finds re-embodiment by, with the inaudible and sometimes audible echo, accessing the shared consciousness that transforms her sense of herself and verifies her embodied being. After exploring how the air is faced in key texts spanning nineteenth-century American literature, this chapter will close with a few of Dickinson’s poems where disembodied features find re-embodiment through and for her embodied being.

Transformations in Kind:

“Of Strangers is the Earth the Inn / Of Secrets is the Air –”⁵⁷

While Dickinson faces the air as a listener in the poem beginning “Air has no Residence,” Emerson creates a subject who faces it as a speaker in *Nature*. If, as a listener, Dickinson experiences the aural equivalent of eye contact that exceeds the two-way dimension of such

contact and entails a dynamic connection between her, the air, and the resonant traces of their shared consciousness, then as a speaker, Emerson's subject articulates a version of eye contact that blocks the two-way dimension of such contact and entails a delightful connection between himself and the air as his imagination speaks for it and, thus, makes it signal his sovereign consciousness. For example, when Emerson's subject faces the air in *Nature*, he sees it as an "atmosphere" that "was made transparent with [the] design" of the sublime for man (*Complete Works* 1:7). The air facilitates but is excluded from the delightful rather than dynamic connection between him and this sublime design, which signals his sovereign consciousness. This face-to-face moment with air dictates his face-to-face moments with mostly nonhuman and nonliving others too, and they also facilitate but remain excluded from similarly delightful rather than dynamic connections. When Emerson faces the "always present" and "always inaccessible" stars, a delightful connection forms between him and his "reverence," and when he faces the "flowers, animals, [and] mountains," a delightful connection forms between him and his "wisdom" – what he calls the "wisdom of his best hour" (*Complete Works* 1:7-8). Both this reverence and wisdom signal his sovereign consciousness.

The delightful connection itself is something that hails to "the simplicity of his childhood" and recurs throughout *Nature* (*Complete Works* 1:8). As a kind of connector, the term "delight" synthesizes both the smaller word "light," as that which aids our sight, and the prefix "de," as that which alters the light to enhance our sight of things and, in this case, to enhance our sight of things as they signal our sovereign consciousness. As delight connects Emerson's subject and that which signals his sovereign consciousness, "every hour and season yields its tribute of delight" and "every hour and change corresponds to and authorizes a different state of the mind, from breathless noon to grimmest midnight" (*Complete Works* 1:9). In fact, like the

term “delight,” the phrases “breathless noon” and “grimmest midnight” take the luminosities of “noon” and “midnight” that make the air faceable, and they alter these luminosities as “breathless” and “grimmest” to make the air faceable as a signal of his sovereign consciousness at both moments. It’s not hard to understand why Emerson’s subject believes that Nature suits “equally well a comic or a mourning piece” (*Complete Works* 1:9).⁵⁸

Dickinson and Emerson’s subject diverge in this same moment of facing the air because she is a listener and he is a speaker. When Dickinson listens, shared consciousness circulates in the dynamic connection between her, the air, and what they hear, and that consciousness accosts her and persuades and conveys her to inaudibly echo that moment of facing by transforming her sense of herself and verifying her embodied being. When Emerson’s subject lets his imagination speak for the air, his sovereign consciousness circulates in the delightful connection between him and the air, and his consciousness makes the air inaudibly echo their moment of facing by transforming into a signal of his sovereign consciousness – a transformation that upholds his sense of himself and verifies his cognitive Being. While Emerson’s subject is a speaking subject when he faces the air, he almost opts to listen to it after traversing “a bare common, in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky” (*Complete Works* 1:9). Caught up in his “exhilaration,” he admits that the air can’t be signaling his sovereign consciousness because he doesn’t have, as he puts it, any “occurrence of special good fortune” in his “thoughts” (*Complete Works* 1:9). Instead of transforming the air into a sublime design, a breathless noon, or a grimmest midnight, Emerson’s subject himself is transformed:

Standing on the bare ground, – my head bathed in the blythe air, and uplifted into infinite space, – all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball. I am nothing. I see all. The currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part and particle of

God. (*Complete Works* 1:10)

Disentangled from the delightful connection between him and the air as a signal of his sovereign consciousness, the air simply moves through him. When the air is no longer transforming into such a signal, he is transforming by sense rather than speech. By sensing himself not seeing, he is transformed *to* see all, even though he cannot see all. We might also say that by sensing himself not speaking, he is transformed *to* speak all, even though he cannot speak all. This transformation is what Pease calls “a *seeing seen through*” (225). If we’ve been transforming the world into a signal of our sovereign consciousness, the world will transform us back. This is how, as discussed in this dissertation’s introduction, Echo and Narcissus are transformed into a mere chattering echo and a mere tiny flower respectively in Ovid’s *Metamorphosis* and how, here, Emerson’s subject is transformed into a mere transparent eye-ball – the “part and particle” he had been letting his imagination speak for. Evading what he calls the “trifle” or “disturbance” of roles such as “brother,” “acquaintance,” “master or servant,” it seems like a relief to escape the dictates of his sovereign consciousness (*Complete Works* 1:10). If Echo and Narcissus could’ve written essays as they transformed, then they might have had similar moments of sensing themselves not speaking and being transformed to speak all and yet, because of the transformation itself, being incapable of speaking all. *Metamorphosis* transforms us *to* do something that our new form will prevent us from doing.

Ovid might destine Emerson’s subject to a long fate as a transparent eye-ball, but Emerson himself has an essay to finish – a point to make. On the verge of a dynamic connection between himself, the air, and the currents that are resonantly tracing their shared consciousness, Emerson’s subject pits his attention at the “horizon line” where his listening meets his speaking, and then his speaking takes over (*Complete Works* 1:10). He grants that this “horizon line”

conveys itself rather than signaling his sovereign consciousness, but then he compares it to being “somewhat as beautiful as his own nature” (*Complete Works* 1:10). Resuming human form in the following paragraph, Emerson’s subject relents that there may be more than his delightful connection with the air and everything else. Seeming aware of a potential dynamic connection between himself, the air, and some resonant trace of their shared consciousness, he admits that such a dynamic connection – in contrast to his usual delightful one – would prove to be the “greatest delight” (*Complete Works* 1:10). Emerson’s subject explains: “The greatest delight which the fields and woods minister, is the suggestion of an occult relation between man and the vegetable” (*Complete Works* 1:10). The momentary metamorphosis from a human to a transparent eye-ball which is really the metamorphosis from a speaking to a listening subject seems to have made it possible for him to ponder this “greatest delight.” Still, he eases back into his role as a human and a speaking subject. “I am not alone and unacknowledged,” he assures himself, and then he lets his imagination speak for what he faces (*Complete Works* 1:10). The fields and woods “nod” to him first, and then, he “to them” (*Complete Works* 1:10). Anytime he believes he is “thinking justly or doing right,” their “effect” signals his sovereign consciousness reassuringly, “like that of a higher thought or a better emotion coming over [him]” (*Complete Works* 1:11). Punctuating this string of affirmations, he finally confirms that the power of finding delight belongs to man or his harmony with nature, but not to the world of nature. “Nature always wears the colors of the spirit,” he resolves, “To a man laboring under calamity, the heat of his own fire hath sadness in it. Then, there is a kind of contempt of the landscape felt by him who has just lost by death a dear friend” (*Complete Works* 1:11). For a moment, he almost listens for an occult relation comparable to a dynamic connection that might form between him, the air, and resonant traces of their shared consciousness through the fields and woods.

Maintaining his role as a speaker, Emerson's subject's speaking continues to let his imagination speak for what he faces, and as such speaking itself becomes a practice, it becomes something that others can pick up as well – notably the idealist and child subjects in *Nature*. Their speaking, Pease explains, reveals that Emerson's "subject" is not a person but a "practice of the transference of the self onto the position of the other" (232). Thus far, the moment of facing itself has prompted Emerson's subject to transform what he faces into a signal of his sovereign consciousness, but as such transformations become a practice, he becomes more focused on his sovereign consciousness itself and starts looking for others who he can transform into signals of it. Gaining the desire to reduce "the most diverse to one form," Emerson's subject can't find anything to face and, thus, transform (*Complete Works* 1:67). Lamenting that there is no "ray" to face and, as he did with the rays from stars before, transform through another delightful connection, he says:

I cannot greatly honor minuteness in details, so long as there is no hint to explain the relation between things and thoughts; no ray upon the *metaphysics* of conchology, of botany, of the arts, to show the relation of the forms of flowers, shells, animals, architecture, to the mind, and build science upon ideas. (*Complete Works* 1:67)

This "relation between things and thoughts" will always be obstructed by the speaking subject who lets his imagination speak for things. Things must be faced and listened to – not faced and spoken of – for the "occult relation between man and the vegetable," as he had put it earlier, to emerge (*Complete Works* 1:10). Recalling that moment though, Emerson's subject himself transforms into a sympathizer who admits to an "occult recognition and sympathy" for the "bizarre forms of beast, fish, and insect" captured in natural history cabinets (*Complete Works* 1:67). He faces or imagines facing them and almost listens for a dynamic connection between

himself, them, and a resonant trace of their shared consciousness. “Expressions such as the eye that listens to the resonance of the silence,” wrote Levinas, “are not monstrosities” (*Otherwise* 30). Instead of facing and listening though, Emerson’s subject faces and speaks.

Specifically, he speaks of man as a “lord” whose sovereign consciousness is no longer just signaled in the air and everything else that he faces but signaled in the whole world that he faces (*Complete Works* 1:68). That search for something to face and transform yields only the entire world. As its “head and heart,” man “finds something of himself in every great and small thing, in every mountain stratum, in every new law of color, fact of astronomy, or atmospheric influence which observation or analysis lay open” (*Complete Works* 1:68) Still, he can’t shake the “occult recognition and sympathy” that he holds for the “bizarre forms of beast, fish, and insect” to whom he almost listened when he either faced or imagined facing them (*Complete Works* 1:67). Nor can he shake the earlier suggestion of the occult relation between man and the vegetable to which he almost listened after facing the air as a transparent eye-ball. Finally, Emerson’s subject relents a preference for “imperfect theories, and sentences, which contain glimpses of truth” over “digested systems which have no one valuable suggestion” (*Complete Works* 1:70). Once again facing the air, he almost listens but can’t bear the awkward silence. To break it, he hands over his narration to an Orphic Poet who speaks for him. This poet himself is a “wise writer [who] will feel that the ends of study and composition are best answered by *announcing undiscovered regions of thought*, and so communicating, through hope, new activity to the torpid spirit” (*Complete Works* 1:70, emphasis mine). The Orphic Poet’s announcement of these undiscovered regions is described by Pease as the “echo of the ‘secret’ thoughts of nature” (234). Emerson’s subject is not echoing nature though; the Orphic Poet is echoing nature, which is a signal of the sovereign consciousness of Emerson’s subject. Through the Orphic Poet, says

Pease, “nature speaks” as “*Nature* humanized” to fulfill the subject’s desire for “an original relation with nature” (234). In this moment of facing nature, Emerson’s subject may have found a dynamic connection between himself, nature, and the resonant trace of their shared consciousness provided by the Orphic Poet’s speech. Still, the Orphic Poet is just the personification of his delight, promising that the connection between Emerson’s subject and nature, here, is just another delightful one.

What brought Emerson’s subject closest to an original relation, or what I call a dynamic connection, was not the Orphic Poet’s echoing of nature’s humanization but Emerson’s subject’s own transformation as a transparent eye-ball in the face of air and his own transformation as a sympathizer in the face of the forms of beast, fish, and insect. To these transformations, though, the Orphic Poet seems to particularly respond: ““We distrust and deny inwardly our sympathy with nature. We own and disown our relation to it, by turns. We are, like Nebuchadnezzar, dethroned, bereft of reason, and eating grass like an ox. But who can set limits to the remedial force of the spirit?”” (*Complete Works* 1:70-71). Only by speaking does the remedial force of the spirit, which we can align with the remedial force of sovereign consciousness, overcome the transformations, or de-thronings, of Emerson’s subject into transparency and sympathy. By listening though, the remedial force of shared consciousness could have mastered rather than overcome these transformations, turning him into someone ready to speak differently and without denigrating the grass and the ox, each with their own consciousness. Such mastery means not always knowing what to say yet trusting that, “Later than Light,” we will have transformed into someone capable of speaking differently, even appropriately.

In *Nature*, Emerson’s subject is a speaker who transforms into a transparent eye-ball, returns to a speaker, transforms into a sympathizer, and then returns to a speaker who hands his

narration over to another speaker. The pattern, though, is supposed to speak to us – to ask us whether every transformation will return us to speaking or persuade and convey us into the listening that will honor that transformation and, eventually, let us speak differently. The pattern may have even spoken to Dickinson, whose poem beginning “Air has no Residence” was written or copied around 1865. The first stanza bears a remarkable resemblance to the memorable moment when Emerson’s subject transforms into a transparent eye-ball. What initially seems like a description of the air might be a rendition of her own transparency as it revokes any possible recognition between herself and the air. She can’t recognize the air and so it “has no Residence, / no Neighbor, / No Ear, no Door,” and the air can’t recognize, by “Apprehension,” Dickinson as “another.” The final sentiment – “Oh, Happy Air!” – keeps them safe from any possible delightful connection that would turn the air into a signal of her sovereign consciousness, and like Emerson’s transcendental eye-ball, Dickinson seems relieved to have escaped the confines of her sovereign consciousness. The exclamation brings her transparency to its limit though, and returning to human form, she can either speak or listen. Because Dickinson’s second stanza listens, it suggests what might have happened if Emerson’s subject had done the same. The dynamic connection forms between Dickinson, the air, and the resonant traces of their shared consciousness, and that shared consciousness accosts her and then persuades and conveys her to echo the moment of facing, which transforms her sense of herself and verifies her embodied being.

Once transformed “Later than Light,” Dickinson, who has listened, is past the point of no return, and her conception of consciousness as shared means that she must honor her responsibility to over and above her recognition of what or who she might face in the next dynamic connection forged in her acoustic state of radical belonging. Ignoring this responsibility

risks the mania transmitted across the chain of face-to-face moments in the last chapter of Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick; Or, the Whale*. The chain begins when Captain Ahab faces the air and orders his crew to "crowd [the ship] into the wind's eye" (Melville 565). A delightful connection forms between him and the air that is the wind's eye, which stirs images from his memory's eye including the sea of his youth, the purity of his self-image, and this ship of his flesh. The air that is the wind's eye becomes a signal of his sovereign consciousness, and while Ahab continues to face it, he hears the Pequod's shaking sails, but no dynamic connection forms between him, the air, and the sound of the sails that almost finds him listening. Not yet anyway. Instead, he takes "one more good round look aloft here at the sea," and as he faces the sea, a delightful connection forms between him and the sea, which stirs another image from his memory's eye: "old, old sight and yet somehow so young; aye, and not changed a wink since I first saw it, a boy, from the sand-hills of Nantucket!" (Melville 565). The sea, too, becomes a signal of his sovereign consciousness.

Next, he faces the Pequod, but the connection forming between him and this ship is not entirely delightful. Seeing the "tiny mosses in these warped cracks," he compares them to his self-image and boasts: "No such green weather stains Ahab's head!" (Melville 565). At this point, however, a dynamic connection is forming between Ahab, the ship, and the "sound in our hulls" from the wind whipping around, a sound which is becoming a resonant trace of their shared consciousness (Melville 565). In a move that shows him wondering whether consciousness is shared between him and the ship or whether the ship is a signal of his sovereign consciousness, he asks, "[A]re we not, *my* ship?" (Melville 565, emphasis mine). When Ahab echoes this moment of facing, he accesses the shared consciousness between him and the ship and everyone and everything on or around the ship, but he refuses to let it transform his sense of

himself or verify his embodied being. Willfully upholding his sense of himself and verifying his cognitive Being, he shirks his responsibility to the ship he's facing and everything he will yet face. Still, he seems to be aware that his resistance to transformation will result in his own forced transformation. "Will I have eyes at the bottom of the sea," he asks, "supposing I descend those endless stairs?" (Melville 565). In a move that shows he knows better, he tells the ship's mast-head to "keep a good eye upon the whale, the while I'm gone" (Melville 565). Acknowledging yet forsaking his shared consciousness with the ship, he prepares his final hunt for Moby Dick.

In this moment, Melville describes Ahab as "still gazing around" (565). Although he is once again facing the air, a delightful connection does not form between him and the air as a signal of his sovereign consciousness. With the sounds of the ship and the wind tracing the shared consciousness between him and everything he faces, the air is itself the "blue cloven air," and the chain of face-to-face moments that found Ahab facing the air, the sea, and the ship comes full circle as he again faces the air (Melville 565). The chain emerges as an expanding dynamic connection set to include more and more subjects, beginning with Ahab's first mate. As Ahab shakes Starbuck's hand, "their eyes fasten," and Starbuck begs him not to lower his boat, and later, as Starbuck asks him to end his hunt for Moby Dick, Ahab's bloat slides by Starbuck, who is still on the Pequod, "so plainly to distinguish Starbuck's face" all over again Melville 566, 568). When the line between Ahab's boat and Moby Dick finally "snap[s]," that snap resonantly traces the shared consciousness between all subjects facing one another in the expanding dynamic connection (Melville 570). "Empty air" faces the crew (Melville 570). Then, their "enchanted eyes" face Moby Dick, and the whale itself faces the Pequod only to ram it, and then the shared consciousness circulating in this expanding dynamic connection is traced by the waters rushing through the breach "as mountain torrents down a flume" (Melville 571). When

Melville describes the tumult of “men and timbers” and writes that “Some fell flat upon their faces,” it seems clear that these faces are inclusively human, nonhuman, and nonliving (571). As the flag and the hawk’s wing that Tashtego nailed to the Pequod face the “open air,” what began with air ends with air. After Ahab’s full-circle moment of facing the air, he faces Starbuck twice, who faces the air, which faces the crew, who faces Moby Dick, who faces the Pequod, which faces the air for the last time (Melville 572). The way that air becomes a subject with consciousness explains why Starbuck, just after the Pequod is rammed, exclaims: “all ye sweet powers of the air, now hug me close!” (Melville 570). Such words suggest his desire to go back in time and face the last thing Ahab faced before refusing to transform out of his mania. There is no going back to that moment for another chance though. The shared consciousness that circulates in this expanding dynamic connection is one entirely aware that Ahab’s refusal to transform has taken them all past the point of no return.

The only one excluded from the chain of face-to-face moments in this dynamic connection is Ishmael – until, that is, he’s drawn to the “black bubble at the axis of that slowly wheeling circle,” and then he is face-to-face with the last flash of that grim air as the bubble “burst[s] upward” (Melville 573). In this moment, a dynamic connection forms between Ishmael, the air, and the “burst” that resonantly traces their shared consciousness. It does accost Ishmael and persuade and convey him to echo that moment of facing by transforming his sense of himself and his embodied being. If this inaudible echo of facing is his transformation into a narrator, then his audible echo of it is his narration of *Moby-Dick; or, the Whale*. The whole tale forces him to honor his responsibility to over and above his recognition of what or who he might face in the dynamic connections forged across its chapters. Facing us as readers and, with the first sentence, asking us to “Call” him Ishmael, he asks us to do two things (Melville 3). First, he asks us to

echo his democratizing voice in the large acoustic state of radical belonging that is Melville's novel, and second, within that acoustic state, Ishmael asks us to form a dynamic connection with him, wherein our own voice will resonantly trace our shared consciousness with him. But if we call him Ishmael, we will be called to listen as this shared consciousness accosts us and persuades and conveys us to transform our sense of ourselves and our embodied being too.

Consciousness in Kind:

“Her whole Responsibility - / To imitate, be Mine —”⁵⁹

The chain of face-to-face moments in *Moby Dick* offers a model for how canonical nineteenth-century American writers equate the privilege of the speaker, especially one whose imagination is also a capable speaker, with responsibility to anyone and anything that the speaker may face in the dynamic connections that trace shared consciousness. One of the first signs that this responsibility might be compromised is the disembodiment of features like the face, brain, and heart. If we let our disembodiment seek re-embodiment by resisting or refusing access to shared consciousness and asserting sovereign consciousness, then these features will remain disembodied in our speech as it upholds our sense of ourselves as, suddenly, disembodied, and verifies our cognitive Being as a worthy remainder. Disembodied, these features begin the transformation that the rest of ourselves won't make – at least not yet. For example, Emerson's subject resists access to shared consciousness while he faces the air and the forms of beast, fish, and insect and asserts his sovereign consciousness by speaking of himself as the world's “head and heart,” which upholds his sense of himself as a disembodied head and heart and verifies his cognitive Being. Likewise, Melville's Ahab flat out refuses his access to the shared

consciousness between him and the ship (and everyone and everything on and around it) even though it is traced by the sound of wind in the hull, and he likewise asserts his sovereign consciousness by speaking of the crew as “[his] arms and [his] legs,” which upholds his sense of himself as a disembodied captain who, despite verifying his cognitive Being, seems to know that he’s about to have eyes at the bottom of the sea. The pattern in *Nature* suggests that Emerson’s subject will endure another transformation in a dynamic connection of facing with what or who is other – one that neither he nor his Orphic Poet may be able to talk him out of. Likewise, the final events of *Moby-Dick* are Ahab’s transformation in a dynamic connection of vivid facing that just keeps expanding. The stakes are different, but the results are disembodiment.

It bears mentioning that nobody is immune to the intellectual disembodiment that occurs in moments of facing when we miss something or our sovereign consciousness gains a bit of volume and eloquence, tempting us to uphold our sense of ourselves and to verify the comfort of our cognitive Being. The most terrifying thing about our sovereign consciousness is that it is articulate. We are going to be disembodied. If, however, our disembodiment seeks re-embodiment by listening to shared consciousness, then these features will find re-embodiment in the inaudible echo that transforms our sense of ourselves and verifies, namely, embodied being. As a physicist, this experience of disembodiment and re-embodiment was common for Tyndall. When he encouraged people to use their imaginations to face sound and light waves in the air, he likely knew that letting the imagination speak for the atom or molecule risked turning it into a signal of their sovereign consciousness, but he also likely knew that it chanced turning the moment into one that recalled their other moments of responsible facing – when their consciousness with another was resonantly traced. Ursula DeYoung emphasizes that the metaphysics of sight more so than the exposition of physical science helped Tyndall face

phenomena that he located ““beyond the pale of experience”” like planetary movement, earth formations, species evolution, and bodily processes (qtd. in 93). However, the metaphysical sight that allowed the imagination to speak and the exposition of physical science always served, together, a moment of responsible facing.

In his travel book *Mountaineering in 1861*, Tyndall himself faces the air before facing everything else around him, and he denies that it could signify any sovereign consciousness and how, rather, anyone’s shared consciousness with it can re-embody the “narrow brain.” He writes:

The mutations of the atmosphere, the blue zenith and the glowing horizon; rocks, snow, and ice; the wondrous mountain world into which he looks, and which refuses to be encompassed by a narrow brain:—these are objects at once poetic and scientific, and of such plasticity that every human soul can fashion them according to its own needs. (qtd. in 74)

Although he suggests that the air and everything else he faces “*can* be fashioned” in ways that might even make them signals of a sovereign consciousness, he goes on to say that the it is “not my object to dwell on these things at present,” and he goes on to critique the impulse to assess the effect of glacier sliding by focusing on glacier mass which, he argues in *Mountaineering* and a slew of published letters, must be understood more dynamically. Assessing the effect of glacier sliding means admitting that “not only does the glacier act upon the rocks, but the rocks must of necessity act upon the under surface of the glacier,” which the furrowed under surfaces of glaciers proved (*Mountaineering* 72). He laments that few people can “resist” seeing glaciers only as magnificent bodies that, like the one that once occupied what become ““Upper Lake,”” are the agents of formations like the ones in the Black Valley of Killarney “frantically” named ““Cannon Rock, the ‘Man of War,’ and ‘Giant’s Coffin’” (71-71). Throughout his life, he had a

hard time convincing people that glacier mass was impacted by the rock bed that it was impacting. “Ice is slippery; ice is fusible; and in dead winter water flows along the glacier’s bed. In dead winter the under surface of the glacier is wearing away. The glacier,” Tyndall wrote, “slides bodily over its rock bed.”

When Tyndall acknowledges that the “human soul can fashion” that which it faces “according to its own needs” – a quote often attributed to Tyndall’s interdisciplinary spirit – he is exposing a skill but not without also exposing the consequences of that skill, ones that were hard for him to fight with science. Our disembodied “narrow brain[s]” cannot encompass what we face. They can, however, find re-embodiment if we face what they can’t encompass and listen to our shared consciousness with it. Then, the narrow brain can find re-embodiment in the inaudible echo that transforms our sense of ourselves and verifies, again, embodied being. In these cases, we participate with our own transformation rather than delay or let it happen to us. Dickinson takes this participation seriously, and when parts of her become disembodied, she does indeed turn to her shared consciousness with that which she faces. However, this shared consciousness doesn’t just accost and then persuade or convey her to inaudibly echo her own way back together. It persuades and conveys her to inaudibly – and sometimes audibly – echo her way back together *with* the parts of other subjects that are disembodied too. Her disembodied features – like the face, brain, and heart – are dispatched into the world to be re-embodied with other’s and non-other’s faces, brains, and hearts in dynamic connections of shared consciousness. This move, itself, asks us to understand facing as a moment of disembodiment from which we do not recover alone but with the other that we face. For Tyndall’s sake, Dickinson might have re-embodied the narrow brain with the melting glacier.

Indeed, there are disembodied brains across several of Dickinson’s poems. The brain

“runs within it’s Groove,” contains a “Blossom,” is “dropped” only to leave the soul numb, is “split” from the mind’s cleaving, has “Corridors surpassing / Material [and Corporeal] Place,” and finally is “wider than the sky.”⁶⁰ In these poems, we are challenged to find or let these disembodied brains find re-embodiment with other disembodied parts in the inaudible echo of responsible facing. In her poem beginning “The Brain – is wider than the Sky,” which was written or copied around 1863, Dickinson uses a series of comparisons to show how facing what is being measured lets us re-embody the disembodied brain with whatever has been disembodied by measurement. There is a remarkable resemblance between the arguments and disembodiments in both Dickinson’s poem and Tyndall’s book *Mountaineering*. For her, the brain is wider than the sky, but if she is referring to the sky that the imagination has spoken for, then she is in perfect agreement with Tyndall – that the brain is too narrow to encompass the actual sky. It’s likely that Tyndall’s work reached and influenced Dickinson. His lectures and addresses were reprinted in America, and DeYoung notes that the readability of his work, especially on glaciers, compelled colleagues to see him as more of a “popular writer” (6).

In the passage from *Mountaineering* above, Tyndall hopes to re-embody the narrow brains of people marveling at glaciers by putting them face-to-face with fragmented and melting glaciers. Similarly, Dickinson hopes to re-embody the brain whose imagination has spoken for the sky, the sea, and even God by putting them both – the disembodied brain and that which has been disembodied into a signal of sovereign consciousness – face-to-face with one another. In this move, she makes us, as readers, the resonance that traces the consciousness shared in the dynamic connection between the brain and what it faces. If the brain and what it faces were personified to echo this shared consciousness, they might transform their sense of themselves and verify their embodied being. This is not what happens though. As the traces and witnesses to

their shared consciousness, what we see transforms our sense of their relation and verifies their embodied being with one another. If the brain is ours, we've been embodied with the sky, the sea, even God. The poem reads:

The Brain - is wider than the / Sky -

For - put them side by side -

The one the other will +contain [“+include” above contain]

With ease - and You - beside –

The Brain is deeper than the / sea -

For - hold them - Blue to Blue -

The one the other will absorb -

As Sponges - Buckets - do –

The Brain is just the weight / of God -

For - Heft them - Pound for Pound -

And they will differ - if they / do -

As Syllable from Sound –

After introducing the subject whose shared consciousness was resonantly traced with the air while they were face-to-face in the poem beginning “Air has no Residence” and after making her poem the resonant trace of shared consciousness between the disembodied brain and the disembodied others that came face-to-face with it in “The Brain – is wider than the Sky,” Dickinson gives us another perspective of the dynamic connection between face-to-face subjects and that which resonantly traces their shared consciousness. In the poem beginning “To know

just how He suffered – would be dear,” she wishes she could have come face-to-face with a dying acquaintance and esteems the value as well as the comfort of shared consciousness as it re-embodies us with our world and may do so yet in any of our worlds. She writes:

To know just how He suf / fered – would be dear –
 To know if any Human eyes / were near
 To whom He could entrust / His wavering gaze –
 Until it settled +broad – on / Paradise – +full +firm

To know if He was patient – / part content –
 Was Dying as He thought – / or different –
 Was it a pleasant Day / to die –
 And did the Sunshine / face his way –

What was His furthest mind –
 Of Home – of God –
 Or What the Distant say –
 At News that He ceased / Human Nature
 Such a Day –

And Wishes – Had He any –
 Just His Sigh – accented –
 Had been legible – to Me –
 And was He Confident / until

Ill fluttered out – in Everlasting Well –

And if He spoke – What name was Best –

What +last +first

What one broke off with

At the Drowsiest –

Was he afraid – or tranquil –

Might He know

How Conscious Consciousness – / could grow –

Till Love that was – and / Love too best to be –

Meet – and the Junction / +be Eternity⁶¹ +mean

The potential chain of face-to-face moments between “any Human eyes” and the dying person and then between the dying person and the “Sunshine” lead, by Stanza 4, to Dickinson wondering what kind of resonance might have traced the shared consciousness between the dying person and what he faced. The resonance, she suggests, may have been “His Sigh” or utterance of a name. Although Dickinson could not participate in a dynamic connection of shared consciousness in this moment, she hopes that one crystallized when she writes: “Might He know / How Conscious Consciousness – could grow – Till Love that was – and Love too best to be – Meet – and the Junction be Eternity.” This poem invites us to let “Love” become a disembodied feature just like a heart, a brain, or a face. Because one’s disembodied “Love” can find re-embodiment with another disembodied “Love” through shared consciousness in this world, Dickinson suggests that it might do the same in another or a next one.

In the poems that follow this poem beginning “To know just how He suffered – would be dear” in Fascicle 32, Dickinson imagines how responsible facing in another or a next world might cultivate dynamic connections of shared consciousness. In the poem beginning “It was too late for Man,” she suggests that face-to-face contact with God will replace face-to-face contact with the earth. She writes:

It was too late for Man –
 But early, yet for God –
 Creation – impotent to help –
 But Prayer – remained – / Our side –

How excellent the Heaven –
 When Earth – cannot be had –
 How hospitable – then – the / face
 Of Our +Old Neighbor – God –

+new⁶²

In the final poem in this fascicle, the one beginning “The power to be true to You,” Dickinson argues that only the shared consciousness of responsible facing on earth will prepare us for any shared consciousness in responsible facing thereafter, and she lodges a critique of the sovereign consciousness that might let imagination speak for what it faces. Any advocacy of a sovereign consciousness not only impinges on the dynamic connections that might be had on earth but also “deprive[s]” her of any such connections, if they’re possible, that she might have thereafter. The last stanza of this poem reads:

Of This – Could Man deprive Me –

Himself – the Heaven excel –
 Whose invitation – Yours / reduced
 Until it showed too small –⁶³

Dickinson reminds us that everything we hope to face depends on the responsible facing that, as Levinas puts it, is “as a response to [the other’s] proximity before any question” (*Otherwise* 24).

Responsible facing helps us find re-embodiment in this world and even prepares us for the re-embodiment that we anticipate needing in another one, whether foreign, imposed, or eternal. In the poem beginning “The mob within the heart,” Dickinson shows us how the part of us that most often seeks re-embodiment – the heart – finds it with other subjects’ disembodied hearts – from the outside in as opposed to the inside out. The poem reads:

The mob within the heart
 Police cannot suppress
 The riot given at the first
 Is authorized as peace

Un-certified of scene “not” bracketed with “un-”
 Or signified of sound
 But growing like a hurricane
 In a congenial ground.⁶⁴

Although this heart contains a “mob,” it is “authorized as peace” because the heart itself is continually re-embodied with other hearts in a dynamic connection of shared consciousness that is enlarging beyond the certification of any one “scene” of facing or any one “sound” resonantly tracing it. It is enlarging by “growing like a hurricane” in re-embodiment with other hearts across

the “congenial ground” that hosts an entire acoustic state of radical belonging. This is one of the few poems that Dickinson ends with a period, effecting the certainty of the mob in the heart – and its likeness to a hurricane in congenial ground – as an emblem of the heart’s re-embodiment with other hearts through responsible facing. Re-embodied with other hearts and from the outside in, the heart of embodied being has an eloquence distinct from that of the mind of cognitive Being. In the poem beginning “Confirming All who analyze,” Dickinson says: “That Eloquence / is when the / Heart / Has not / a Voice / to spare –.”⁶⁵

Chapter Three: Quality of Loss, Verge of Seas to be

I cannot want / it more –

I cannot want / it less –

My Human Nature's / fullest force

Expend itself / on this.

And yet it / nothing is

To him who / easy owns –

Is Worth itself / or Distance –

He fathoms who / obtains.

-Emily Dickinson⁶⁶

Introduction:

“I hope human nature has truth in it”⁶⁷

When Dickinson's echo reflected the democratizing voice of earthen citizenship in chapter one of this dissertation and when it ended up tracing the shared consciousness that verified embodied being in chapter two of this dissertation, it did so within her large acoustic state of radical belonging. In this chapter, though, Dickinson's echo reflects her contact with others in sonic spaces where there is no connection of belonging. Because listening in these sonic spaces is not so effortless, she deepens her listening by depersonalizing herself. In her human

nature poems specifically, we get a close-up of this depersonalization across two phases of erasure. Above and beyond letting go of her first-person voice to hear what or who is other, she lets go of her human nature and personifies it into contact with that other. By effect, her first-person voice slips away or is already absent, and her “human nature” slips into the sonic space shared with the other and “feels,” becomes “aware,” “dotes,” and “Expend[s] itself” there. In close-up, Dickinson’s depersonalization unfolds as an out-of-human-nature experience that is not totally unlike, if differently nuanced than, an out-of-body-experience.⁶⁸ The personifications above are from the poems beginning “A Light Exists in Spring,” covered in the second section of this chapter as exemplary of Dickinson’s depersonalization, as well as “I thought that nature was enough,” “How Human Nature dotes,” and “I cannot want it more,” covered in the third section of this chapter as elaborations of that example.⁶⁹ Many of Dickinson’s other references to human nature also employ personification. Human nature “proceed[s]” in the poem beginning “The reticent volcano keeps,” is “freckled” in the poem beginning “What Soft-Cherubic Creatures,” and hides in the poems beginning “As old as Woe” and “It was a quiet seeming Day.”⁷⁰

Because Dickinson’s practice of listening is deepened through her depersonalization, it joins a mode of writing that Richard Poirier describes as “voicing the idea of self-eradication” in a chapter appropriately titled, “Writing Off the Self” (185). While Poirier engages with writers’ “self-erasure” spanning Emerson to Foucault from *his* practice of listening to “determine how the sounds they make might impinge on various kinds of readers” (192), this chapter engages with Dickinson’s depersonalization as a form of self-erasure from *her* practice of listening, a practice that cannot be separated from one common to her fellow New England Calvinists: the practice of listening for God’s call especially during the Great Revival of the 1840s and 1850s. This practice of listening moved from introspection within oneself to regeneration from without oneself,

culminating in expressed conversion. Like her friends and family members who listened for God's call, Dickinson engaged in introspection. However, instead of readying her spirit for witness by "opening the soul to the ministrations of that Physician who heals all ills," Shira Wolosky finds Dickinson's introspection committing her spirit to "antiwitness" by tying the soul to Remorse as the source of "disease" rather than the means to a "cure" (78). "The process of introspection," argues Wolosky, "is reversed" (78). When the practice of listening that transitions from introspection to regeneration is disrupted, it's not just Dickinson's observation of Calvinism that is affected, it's her practice of listening too. With respect to Wolosky's reading of this reversal into the way Dickinson disposes of doctrines like "reprobation" and "utter depravity" while embracing the centrality of "suffering" to life after death, I read this reversal into the way Dickinson deepens her practice of listening through depersonalization as a form of self-, but more specifically human-, erasure.

The disruption of her practice of listening for God's call is inscribed into the disruption of her practice of listening to what or who is other when there is no connection of belonging. In both cases, she doesn't hear what, presumably, she should hear, and so she lets go of the part of her that would, presumably, benefit from what she should hear. The part of her that would have been changed by regeneration and satisfied by belonging is her human nature, so this is the part of her that, while not being changed, remains changeable in the erasures of the depersonalization that deepens her listening. E. Brooks Holifield points to some obfuscation in Calvinist theology as to whether regeneration changed "human 'nature,' or human 'affections,'" an obfuscation inherited after an 1820s debate among Edwardians about whether the source of sin was one's nature or one's exercise of sin itself (351).⁷¹ At the time, advocates of sinful exercise feared that the unconverted would reject the association of regeneration with a change in nature, and

advocates of a sinful nature feared that the exercise doctrine strayed too far from traditional theology by “threaten[ing] the idea of permanent human nature” (Holifield 350). Springing from this debate’s preoccupation with human nature was the tension between traditional theology and religious revival throughout the nineteenth century. Even so, traditional theology’s understanding of a sinful nature tended to hold firm, especially in Dickinson’s Amherst.⁷²

While scholars agree that Dickinson doubted the depravity of human nature, it’s hard to definitively side her with advocates of nature as sinful or advocates of exercise as sinful.⁷³ That debate aside, Dickinson’s description of converted friends and family members in an 1850 letter to friend Jane Humphreys suggests that she believed the immediate change associated with regeneration was, in fact, a change in one’s human nature itself rather than one’s exercise per se.⁷⁴ In her letter, Dickinson recounts the “marvelous change” for those whose practice of listening has culminated in expressed conversion. She beholds how they have benefitted from the sanctification that “sows in such corruption” during introspection within oneself and “rises in golden glory” for the regeneration from without oneself (L 35). The change manifests across their “faces,” “voices,” “eyes,” and generally “tranquil” demeanor, though not necessarily their actions, which are not discussed (L 35). Dickinson writes:

How strange is this sanctification, that works such a marvelous change, that sows in such corruption, and rises in golden glory, that brings Christ down, and shews him, and lets him select his friends! In the day time it seems like Sundays, and I wait for the bell to ring, and at evening a great deal stranger, the “still small voice” grows earnest and rings, and returns, and lingers, and the faces of good men shine, and the bright halos come around them; and the eyes of the disobedient look down, and become ashamed. It *certainly* comes from God – and I think to receive it is blessed – not that I know it from

me, but from those on whom change has *passed*. They seem so very tranquil, and their voices are kind, and gentle, and the tears fill their eyes so often, I really think I envy them. (L 35)

What Dickinson discloses about herself in the middle of this passage is that she is also practicing listening alongside those who are converting, but since her progress from introspection to regeneration has been disrupted, she blurs what it means to be saved by Christ's call with what it means to be saved by a bell, even if what that bell tolls is not entirely clear. It could herald the end of the day or of the burgeoning fever of revival. Almost unexpectedly, her auditory anticipation is met by "the 'still small voice,'" a reference to the one that Elijah hears after listening for but not finding God in a rock-severing wind, earthquake, and fire on Mount Horeb in 1 Kings 19:12 (L 35). The voice asks him what he's doing there. Since Dickinson's practice of listening ensues without reaching what her transformed contemporaries have "found," it is appropriate that this is the voice that "grows earnest and rings, and returns, and lingers" (L 35). In her depiction of contact with the converts in this letter, as in her depiction of contact with what or who is other in her human nature poems, we can sense her navigating the mystery of connection without belonging and the degree to which this mystery comes with a quiet yet divine imperative to determine – to hear – what she's doing in it.

While the disruption of listening for God's call is inscribed into the disruption of listening to the other with whom she does not share belonging, the practice of listening that succeeds disruption is deepened by the depersonalization of relinquishing her first-person voice and her human nature. Dickinson is left hearing the world of her contact with what or who is other, and when she echoes this world, she does so from beyond the perspective of human nature. By the virtue of the echo itself, her practice of listening may give way to expressed speech, but by the

virtue of what the echo reflects, her depersonalization is sustained in that speech. Instead of adhering to one state or another, whether changed or unchanged, her human nature remains changeable – ever subject to the erasures of her ongoing depersonalization. As Poirier explains, “It is possible to confer value on moments of transformation or dissolution without looking ahead toward a narrative of fulfillment. The moment is endowed with something as vague as wonder or beauty, empty of the desire to translate these into knowledge” (202). Post-echo, the world speakable at the expense of her human nature is inexhaustible to and despite her.

After validating the comfort that finds her friends and family members when their human nature changes from one state to another through expressed conversion, Dickinson’s letter to Humphreys confesses to the “joy” that finds her as her human nature remains changeable rather than changed through expressed echoes that are nothing if not poetic, although they become much more in her poems (L 35). Hoping that “human nature has truth in it,” she writes:

I hope human nature has truth in it – Oh I pray it may not deceive – confide – cherish,
 have a great faith in – do you dream from all this what I mean? Nobody *thinks* of the joy,
 nobody *guesses* it, to all appearance old things are engrossing, and new ones are not
 revealed, but there now is nothing old, things are budding, and springing, and singing,
 and you rather think you are in a green grove, and it’s branches that go, and come (L 35).

In the world speakable at the expense of human nature, “there now is nothing old” and “things are budding, and springing, and singing,” and this world is a counterpoint to the one speakable through human nature in which everything is “appearance” (L35). The “joy” that Dickinson derives in the former world is one that, she fears, “[n]obody *thinks* of” if they derive comfort in the latter world as it promises joy in another eternal one (L 35). When Dickinson earlier validates her contemporaries’ experience of human nature as changed, she compares it to being “led

away,” so when the letter closes by saying, “love what you are taken from, and cherish us tho, so dim,” she blurs the physical distance between her and Humphreys with the symbolic distance between their worlds – between the one speakable at the expense of human nature and the one speakable through human nature (L 35).⁷⁵ Just two years before writing to Humphreys, Dickinson justified non-conversion in a letter to friend Abiah Root by saying, “It is hard for me to give up the world” (L 23).⁷⁶ The exhilaration that Dickinson’s letters associate with the world she occupies becomes, in her poems, a real opening into the mystery of connection without belonging.

Drawing from the theological discourse on human nature’s change from one state to another, especially as this discourse came under pressure by Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*, I argue that Dickinson’s human nature poems expose the changeability of human nature in the erasures of her depersonalization which, because it has deepened her practice of listening, lets her hear the world of her contact with what or who is other for what it is and not just what it is to her human nature. When Dickinson echoes this world from beyond the perspective of human nature, her echo grants access to the distinction of alterity that succeeds in differing human nature from itself by differing another’s nature from itself. I look at how the world speakable at the expense of human nature is a counterpoint to the one speakable through human nature wherein distinctions of significance succeed in differing one state of human nature from another, usually saved or unsaved, while also differing human nature from non-human nature. Cary Wolfe’s reading of how Derrida accesses distinctions of alterity by listening to the world of his contact with the animal other will inform how Dickinson accesses distinctions of alterity by listening to the world of her contact with a range of others. Ultimately, the changeability of human nature is more alike to than different from the changeability of any other nature, and the

bond of this likeness is one potential answer, even while it is not a solution, to the mystery of connection without belonging in a world that is equally changeable. Beyond and because of all the changeability they expose, close-ups of Dickinson's depersonalization become not close-ups of herself but panoramas of this world.

To understand how these close-ups of her depersonalization become panoramas of this world, I compare Dickinson's concept of depersonalization to Levinas's concept of "Work." In this comparison, the idiom of human nature in nineteenth-century theology finds its inheritance in the idiom of humanity in Levinas's philosophy. Through the depersonalization that relinquishes human nature in the face of the other, Dickinson's listening apprehends the world of her contact with the other, one that she can echo from beyond the perspective of human nature. This world is audible to her listening *and* in her echo. In the Work that esteems humanity (as the legacy of human nature) in the face of the other, Levinas's listening, which he calls "Saying," apprehends a sense of the other that cannot be echoed or, to use Levinas's terminology, "Said." This sense is audible to the "Saying" *but not* in the "Said." If the close-ups of Dickinson's depersonalization become panoramas of the world made speakable at the expense of human nature, then any close-up of Levinas's Work becomes a glimpse of an eschatology made unspeakable by humanity. While Dickinson dwells in the possibility that already exceeds human nature (the possibility that is), Levinas dwells in the possibility that will belong to humanity (the possibility that will be).

Still, Dickinson's panoramas of the world cannot but intersect with a desire for eschatology – one that, like the world, might also be made speakable at the expense of human nature. We find her coming close to such an eschatology when the depersonalization that is sustained from listening to speaking in her human nature poems becomes implicit in her sea

poems, and a constant cycle from speaking back to listening takes over. After exploring how Dickinson deepens her listening through depersonalization in her human nature poems, this chapter will close by exploring how she cycles back to such listening in her sea poems. The world speakable at the expense of human nature is magnified by the vastness, relentlessness, and constancy of the sea, and these qualities make it the idea frontier for Dickinson's echo and the new limits from which it might not only speak but return to listening.

Human Nature Feels:

"Has Human Nature gone - / Unknowing of his dread / abode - "77

In the poem written or copied around 1865 that begins, "A Light Exists in Spring," Dickinson's deepens her practice of listening through depersonalization to hear a rare sunlight that "Exists in Spring" and not "At any other period." By the time the poem begins, she has already let go of her first-person voice and begun to listen to the light. As the light's "Color stands abroad / On Solitary Fields," she lets go of her "Human Nature" too, and through personification, it "feels" this light in the first of only two lines punctuated into certainty with a period. In the following stanza, human nature remains changeable in the erasures of Dickinson's depersonalization, even blurring into the light's personification. As the light "waits upon the Lawn," her human nature seems to wait too, and when the light is described as "almost speak[ing] to you," it seems to have "almost" spoken to her human nature, which would have been satisfied by this audible sign of belonging. "Almost" is the operative word, though, in this last line punctuated with a period, and Dickinson is left hearing the world of her contact with the light. The poem reads:

A Light Exists in Spring

Not present on the Year

At any other period –

When March is scarcely / here

A Color stands abroad

On Solitary Fields

+That Science cannot / overtake

But Human Nature feels.

It waits upon the Lawn,

It shows the furthest Tree

Upon the furthest Slope / +you know

It almost speaks to you.

Then as Horizons step

Or Noons report away

Without the Formula / of sound

[end page]

It passes and we stay –

A quality of loss

Affecting our Content

As Trade had suddenly / encroached

Opon a Sacrament

As Dickinson deepens her practice of listening through depersonalization, she can sense how her personified human nature anticipates the light's speech, an anticipation that is emblematic of the perspective of human nature. While the word, "almost" heightens that anticipation, two textual moves reinforce it. Dickinson has marked the phrases "That Science cannot overtake" and "you know" for variants, but she hasn't added variants in the poem's margins. Like her human nature's anticipation of the light's speech, these marks anticipate the clarification or correction typical of Dickinson's variants. Instead, the light remains mum, the marks for variants lead to nothing, and in contrast to the resonation of the horizon's "step" and the noon's "report," the contact between Dickinson's human nature and the light, not to mention the contact between the marks for variants and the blank margins, never quite achieve "the Formula / of sound."

Located at the bottom of the poem's first page, the line about "sound" cues a shift. With a turn of the page, Dickinson's first-person voice emerges to echo what she did hear. In a lone line followed by a dash and a stanza break, she begins, "It passes and we stay." Despite the emergence of her first-person voice in the echo that extends from this line through to the last stanza, this echo maintains her depersonalization by reflecting this world from beyond the perspective of her human nature wherein "A quality of loss," she explains, "Affect[s] our Content." The word "Content" could refer to the contentment of her human nature that was not met when the light didn't speak. The word "Content" could also refer to the content of the world of their contact, specifically, the content of non-speech that stretched "abroad," "opon the Lawn," to "the furthest Tree / Opon the furthest Slope" and – because of the poem's performative textuality – the paper itself. By Dickinson's phrasing, "Content" encompasses the contentment of human nature as well as the content of non-speech, and together, they are

affected by a “quality of loss” resulting from a “Trade.” Whereas they might have been affected by loss in the same way that, per Dickinson’s comparison, an interrupted sacrament might have resulted in a lack of grace, this trade promises something else. What falls under the category of “our Content” is affected by a “quality of loss” that is not a loss even though it is not a gain either. This affect is likened to the way an interrupted sacrament results in something that is not a lack grace even though it is not a gain in grace either. The echo’s close clarifies the echo’s first line. What has passed with her anticipation is the world speakable through human nature, and what has stayed is the world speakable at the expense of human nature.

Because Dickinson echoes the world of her contact with the light from beyond the perspective of human nature, the depersonalization that deepened her listening is sustained, and she can hear the contents of this world for what they are and not just what they are to her human nature. Without depersonalization, she might still find herself confronted with non-speech, but she would do so at the risk of hearing it according to a *difference between*: specifically, the difference between non-speech and speech, a difference that threatens non-speech with human nature’s perspective of it as a loss measured by the desire of a gain. In contrast, when her listening is deepened by her depersonalization, her confrontation with non-speech comes with the chance of hearing it according to a *difference of*: specifically, the difference of non-speech from itself, a difference that apprehends non-speech from beyond the limit of human nature’s perspective of it as a loss. Because the content of non-speech is tied to a sense of loss in the world made speakable through human nature, that sense of loss is traded for something else entirely in the one made speakable at the expense of human nature – a world whose contents, whether non-speech or something else, can be spoken into redefinition.

More than a century after Dickinson, Derrida also explores non-speech in the world speakable through humanity, which is a legacy of the world speakable through human nature, especially after the philosophy of Levinas. In this world, non-speech is tied to a sense of sacrifice, which is a kind of loss, so something like depersonalization is necessary to hear such non-speech for what it is and not just what it is through the perspective of humanity. Sacrifice is a severe kind of loss though, so when non-speech is tied to a sense of sacrifice, the stakes heighten for adopting such depersonalization. Without it, the risk of hearing non-speech according to the *difference between* non-speech and speech links up to a larger difference between the human capable of speech and the non-human incapable of it. Through the perspective of humanity, only the human capable of speech can possess this sense of sacrifice. The non-human incapable of speech cannot possess it. For Derrida, some type of depersonalization must help humans hear non-speech according to the *difference of* non-speech from itself, a difference that apprehends non-speech from beyond the limit of humanity's perspective of it as a sacrifice for humans only. In *Animal Rights*, a book that addresses how deconstruction and autopoiesis approach the non-speech of animals after Wittgenstein, Cary Wolfe articulates how Derrida makes this demand of Levinas's philosophy.⁷⁸ Summing up Derrida's critique, Wolfe explains that "the ethical status of the 'community at large' is purchased at the expense of the sacrifice of all forms of difference that are not human," even though "the ethical moment of the self" requires "the animal *in the plural*" (*Animal* 70). This is where Dickinson and Derrida intersect. When Dickinson's poem finally reaches a world made speakable at the expense of human nature, then non-speech (as one of the contents in it) loses its tie to loss – or at least the sense of loss anchored to human nature's perspective. Similarly, Derrida wants Levinas's philosophy to finally reach a world made speakable at the expense of

humanity because then non-speech (as one of the contents in it) can lose its tie to sacrifice – or at least the sense of sacrifice anchored to humanity’s perspective. The way Derrida puts it is that Levinas’s philosophy must “‘*sacrifice sacrifice,*’” (qtd. in Wolfe, *Animal*, 71).

To invoke the first line of Dickinson’s echo, once the worlds made speakable through human nature and humanity *pass* and the worlds made speakable at the expense of human nature and humanity *stay*, then one finds oneself in what Wolfe calls “the ethical moment of the self” (*Animal* 70). Because it endows one’s ability to hear the *difference of* non-speech from itself, this is the moment that sustains depersonalization and, thus, keeps human nature in Dickinson’s case and humanity in Derrida’s case ever changeable in the erasures of depersonalization just when we might think, or fear, that they would disappear in such erasures. As soon as Dickinson echoes the world of contact between herself and the light from beyond the limit of human nature’s perspective, she gains access to the alterity of light as a nonliving other with a nature that differs not from hers but from itself, and thus, she gains access to the alterity of her human nature as it likewise differs from itself. In his famous text, “The Animal that Therefore I am,” Derrida echoes a similar world of contact between himself and his cat. Notably, non-speech comprises the content of both Dickinson’s and Derrida’s worlds of contact. Just as human nature becomes changeable in the erasures of depersonalization that deepen how Dickinson listens to light as a nonliving other in her poem, humanity becomes changeable in the erasures of depersonalization that deepen how Derrida listens to his cat as an animal other in his text. While Dickinson’s depersonalization unfolds with the relinquishment of her human nature above and beyond her first-person voice, Derrida’s depersonalization unfolds with the relinquishment of his humanity as he sheds his clothing and nakedly faces his cat. As it was for Dickinson, once Derrida echoes the world of contact between himself and his cat from beyond the limit of humanity’s

perspective, he gains access to the alterity of his cat as an animal other with an animality that differs not from his humanity but from itself, and thus, he gains access to the alterity of his humanity as it likewise differs from itself in this world. “Nothing,” Derrida confirms, “will have ever done more to make me think through this absolute alterity of the neighbor than these moments when I see myself seen naked under the gaze of a cat” (qtd. in Wolfe, *Animal*, 71).

With these distinctions of alterity, Dickinson’s human nature touches its own non-human nature, and Derrida’s humanity touches its own animality. Human nature and humanity thrive rather than disappear in the erasures of depersonalization because in them, human nature and humanity become traces of their own changeability.⁷⁹ During the Great Revival that coincided with Dickinson’s lifetime, the idiom for discussing human nature emphasized its state, whether changed or unchanged, rather than its ongoing changeability, and this idiom afforded distinctions of signification rather than distinctions of alterity.⁸⁰ Instead of tracing its own changeability, human nature signified different qualities based on its state, and it disappeared into the operation of signification. If the state of a person’s human nature was changed by conversion, then it signified that person’s piety, and, as in Dickinson’s letter to Humphreys, such piety became immediately apparent in that person’s face, voice, eyes, and general demeanor. If the state of a person’s human nature was not changed by conversion though, then it signified that person’s impiety, and such impiety remained seemingly apparent. Unconverted, Dickinson was not shy about admitting that she was considered one of the “lingering bad ones” (L 36).

Theological anecdotes from Dickinson’s time often deferred to peril to reinforce why the idiom of human nature as a signifier should be embraced. A series of such anecdotes appear in *The Religion of Geology* by Edward Hitchcock, a professor of Geology at Amherst College who also designed the curriculum at Amherst Academy, where Dickinson was a student. This book

resided in Dickinson's family library, and in it, Hitchcock argues that the awe that comes with peril dramatizes human nature's status as a signifier of piety or impiety. He explains:

When violent disease racks the frame, and we feel ourselves rapidly sinking into the grave, it is scarcely in human nature to omit crying to God with a feeling that he can save us. In short, it is a dictate of nature to call upon God in times of trouble. Our reasoning about the constancy of nature, which appears to us while in safety so clearly to show prayer for the removal of natural evils to be useless, loses its power, and the feelings of the heart triumph" (348).

In Hitchcock's passage, the awe that comes with peril is a feeling that turns one inward to verify "disease" and "sinking" and then, no matter what one's human nature signifies, it turns one outward to feel the presence of God and the possibility or impossibility of special providence. Because awe turns one to God, it certifies that human nature's status as a signifier is the key to its destiny by or without special providence. Hitchcock's passage suggests that the inevitability of awe in peril should assuage those whose human nature signifies piety and inspire those whose human nature does not yet. Anyone left unassuaged or uninspired is also left out of Hitchcock's equation though.

The role of awe in what is really another practice of listening for God, in this case for God's special providence, is not unlike the role of introspection in the practice of listening for God's call. The power of this awe for anyone, like the power of introspection for Dickinson, may keep one turned inward and disrupt that very practice of listening. With this disruption may come an elected or somewhat unelected depersonalization that deepens how one listens to oneself as the imperiled other. Then, as in Dickinson's poem beginning, *Peril as a Possession*," the awe that

inevitability of awe in peril does not assuage or inspire anyone to do anything more than listen deeply to the other that is themselves, but this experience may impact how one listens deeply to the other that is not themselves too.

Hitchcock's anecdotes use awe to help readers imagine themselves in peril and understand the value of their human nature as a signifier that makes their lives apparent to God, but as in Dickinson's poem, imagining themselves in peril may lead them to discover the value of their human nature as a trace that makes their lives apparent, even audible, to themselves. When Hitchcock depicts a "hardened sailor" on a storm-tossed sea who "employs that breath in ardent prayer which just before had been poured out in blasphemies" and a "widowed mother" in a storm-shaken house who cannot "but pray for the protection of her child upon the treacherous sea" their individual human natures may be read as signifiers of piety or impiety for the eyes of God (Hitchcock 351). On the other hand, their human natures don't resist being read as traces of their own changeability throughout the circumstances that brought the sailor to his post and the widow to her fear, nor do they resist being read as traces of their ongoing changeability in the circumstances of the weathering ship and home. Likewise, when a "devoted missionary" leaves the "land of safety and peace" to face "dangers and sufferings of almost every name" with "no weapons save faith and prayer," his human nature may be read as a signifier of perfect piety for the eyes of God (Hitchcock 353). On the other hand, his human nature doesn't resist being read as a trace of his own changeability throughout the circumstances that brought him to this mission, nor do they resist being read as traces of his ongoing changeability in the circumstances of his mission.

Hitchcock's anecdotes may not leave room for the story or development that would embellish human nature's status as a trace, but his emphasis on human nature's status as a

signifier does not bar the suggestion of its status as a trace. When Wolfe compares the signifier versus the trace to approach the ethical relation of difference, he recalls Derrida's caution regarding the "subject of the signifier" as someone who is capable of "pretending to pretend and hence of being able to put into effect one's power to destroy the trace" (qtd. in *Animal* 75). Even the destruction or obstruction of a trace can leave a trace though. After Dickinson traced her human nature's changeability in the erasure of depersonalization in the poem beginning "A Light Exists in Spring," she drew a horizontal line and started the next poem in the unstitched collection of poems labelled Set 86. It begins, "Banish Air from Air – / Divide Light if you Dare – / They'll meet."⁸¹ Just as human nature thrives by tracing its own changeability in the erasures of depersonalization in the poem about light, the natures of air and light thrive by tracing their own changeability in the erasures of what Dickinson poetically evokes as "Banish[ment]" and "Divi[sion]" in this poem. Reminiscent of the way human nature meets its non-human nature, air meets its non-air nature "While Cubes in a Drop" and light meets its non-light nature when "Pellets of Shape Fit." Finally, films and odors ignite a "Flame" that creates "Steam" over the "impotence" that is equally assignable to all natures. Like awe's fire that searches human nature's creases or traces in peril, this flame warrants that the changeability of nature, whether human, air, or light, will remain traceable in the erasures of depersonalization, banishment, or division. No one state of nature, however powerful, can long persist. Together, these poems honor how the changeability of human nature likens rather distinguishes it from the changeability of nonliving natures like those of air and light. In the world made speakable at the expense of human nature, this likeness answers without quite solving the mystery of connection without belonging.

Discovering the changeability that likens different natures is a worthy outcome of speaking to, or echoing, any world of contact with what or who is other, and during her time, Dickinson was not the only one who thought so. In a letter to friend Mrs. Brown dated July 20, 1841, Henry David Thoreau praises this changeability that likens natures, but the way in which he discovers it is different than Dickinson's. While Dickinson discovers it by apprehending the changeability of human nature through her own depersonalization, Thoreau discovers it by apprehending the changeability of human nature in the personalization of what or who is other. When he personifies his nature into contact with the personalized other, he omits the word "human" because it doesn't apply to just his nature. It also applies to what is human or human-like in the nature of what or who is other. Thus, as his "nature [is] looking into nature, with such easy sympathy as the blue-eyed grass in the meadow looks in the face of the sky," human nature applies to him, the meadow's blue-eyed grass, and the sky's face (4). In the worlds of their contact with what or who is other, Dickinson ends up speaking from beyond the limit of the perspective associated with her human nature, and Thoreau ends up speaking from within the limit of the perspective associated with a new and improved human nature. "From such recess" away from the world speakable through the old concept of human nature, Thoreau tells Mrs. Brown that he is motivated to "put forth sublime thoughts daily" (4).

Although Dickinson and Thoreau speak from different perspectives, both perspectives are salutary transitions out of the world speakable through human nature, and they know it. Thoreau begins his letter by celebrating this transition and wondering whether his addressee, Mrs. Brown, has "any still, startling, well moments, in which you think grandly, and speak with emphasis," and he suggests that such "a golden approach to plain speaking" may not "revolve again" (4). Putting Dickinson's poem and Thoreau's letter side-by-side, it's hard not to recall the moment in

Dickinson's poem when the world made speakable through human nature "passes" and the world made speakable at the expense of human nature "stays" – the moment amenable to what Wolfe calls "the ethical moment of the self" when human nature touches non-human nature (*Animal* 70). For Thoreau though, this is the moment when the world speakable through human nature "revolves" into the world speakable at the *expansion* (as opposed to the *expense*) of human nature. Thoreau admits that not everyone has made this transition when he says:

But I forget that you think more of this human nature than of this nature I praise. Why won't you believe that mine is more human than any single man or woman can be? that in it,—in the sunset there, are all the qualities that can adorn a household,—and that sometimes in a fluttering leaf, one may hear all your Christianity preached. (5)

Thoreau's is not quite an ethical moment of the self. Instead of human nature touching non-human nature, human nature is extended to what or who is other, so it's more of an ethical moment of the other. In Dickinson's ethical moment of the self, light gains the agency to affect the world of her contact with it, and so she associates its non-speech with a "quality of loss" that is not loss itself. Hers is a world made speakable at the expense of human nature. In Thoreau's ethical moment of the other though, Thoreau gains the agency to affect the world of human contact with sunset and leaf as he associates the sunset's light with "household" adornments and the leaf's fluttering with all his addressee's "Christianity preached" (5). His is a world made speakable at the expansion of human nature. It seems possible, though, that the expense of human nature in Dickinson's poem beginning "A Light Exists in Spring" might be an adapted homage to the expansion of human nature in Thoreau's letter, which she could have easily found in the 1865 posthumous publication of Thoreau's *Letters to Various Persons*. While her description of how the sun "waits upon the lawn" in her poem neatly aligns with his description

of how the sunset “wait[s] for my slow virtue” in his letter, their different perspectives of this light create a compelling ethical divergence (4).⁸²

To understand the ethical divergence between Dickinson and Thoreau, we can assess how they relate to what Lawrence Buell calls “nature’s personhood” as it generated a “spirit of care” in the age of Darwin (180, 207). Throughout the nineteenth century, nature’s personhood remained inextricably linked to a “hierarchy of human and nonhuman communities,” so when Darwin advanced ““sympathy beyond the confines of man,”” this sympathy didn’t come from beyond the perspective of man or human nature as epitomized by Dickinson’s depersonalization of herself; rather, it came from within that new and improved perspective for man and human nature as epitomized by Thoreau’s personalization of what or who is other (qtd. in Buell 207). Accordingly, Darwin praised such sympathy as ““one of the prime marks of higher civilization, arising ‘from our sympathies becoming more tender and more widely diffused, until they are extended to the lower animals’” (qtd. in Buell 207). When hierarchies structure human and nonhuman communities though, the changeability that likens all natures cannot answer without solving the mystery of connection without belonging; it can only be deployed to solve that mystery by instantiating a connection of belonging based on nature’s personhood.

This is exactly how the changeability of natures is rendered in an 1868 essay appearing in the *North American Review* by lesser known transcendentalist David Atwood Wasson. He describes poetry as “an illimitable echo” revealing that

everywhere are relation and response; from sun and moon look down glorified human faces; wood and river teem with half-humanities, that sway in the trees and slip in the tide; from the lifted mountain-tops, and from the waste grandeur of the reticent, never-covenanting sea, comes a language at once theirs and his own. (507-08)

Unlike Dickinson's echo, which sustains her depersonalization and the changeability of human nature in its erasures, this one initiates the personalization of what or who is other and the changeability of human nature in the other's personhood. As in Thoreau's letter, human nature applies to what is human or human-like about what or who is other so that "human faces" suit humans as well as the "sun and moon"; "half-humanities" are shared with "wood" and "river;" and a common "language" links the poet, the "lifted mountain-tops," and the "never-covenanting sea" (507-08). Non-human natures are personalized in deference to the hierarchy imposed by human nature. While environmental writing since the nineteenth-century has aimed to expose, challenge, and reverse this hierarchy, turning that Darwinian "sense of care" into what feminist ecological thinkers call an "ethics of care," the inevitability and even the indispensability of personalizing nature may still, as Buell says, either "quicken the sense of caring for nature" or "be deflected back into narcissism" (207, 218). In the worlds made speakable by the expansion of human nature in many nineteenth-century texts, the ease of this care lies in everything seeming more human, but in the worlds made speakable at the expense of human nature in Dickinson's human nature poems, the challenge of this care lies in everything seeming less human. By foreshadowing our need to interrogate the *challenge* over and above the *ease* of caring for nature as the other, Dickinson anticipates the environmental writing on the horizon.⁸³

Human Nature Struggles:

"Exists in every Human Nature / A Goal —"⁸⁴

Written around 1872, about seven years after her poem about light, Dickinson's human nature poem beginning "I thought that nature was enough" opens with her first-person voice

already echoing her past-tense attempt to listen to nature. This first line suggests that listening to nature as the other was “enough” of a challenge before the depersonalization that deepened her listening by relinquishing her human nature above and beyond her first-person voice. While Dickinson overtly describes the part of depersonalization that entailed letting go of her human nature and personifying it to “come” after nature, we can only assume that this depersonalization began or was maintained by letting go of her first-person voice to listen to it. In the erasures of Dickinson’s depersonalization, human nature remained changeable as it was absorbed into nature per the poem’s first stanza and then became “just aware” per the second one. Split across the bottom of the poem’s first page and the top of the poem’s second page are the last two lines that recount her past-tense attempt to hear nature. To the depersonalization that deepened her practice of listening was “added” not a sound but “the Divine / Brief struggle for capacity,” and Dickinson was left hearing something quite different than the world of her contact with nature.

The poem reads:

I thought that / nature was enough

Till Human / nature came

And that the / other did absorb [“But” after the double strikethrough of “And”]

As Parallax / a Flame – [“Firmament” below “Parallax”]

Of Human / nature just / aware

There added / the Divine

[end page]

Brief struggle / for capacity

The power to / contain

Is always as / the contents

But give a / Giant room

And you will / lodge a Giant [“shall” above” “will”]

And not a / smaller man [“lesser” and a horizontal line below “smaller”]

[“A Giant is your Tenant” below horizontal line]

With such depersonalization, Dickinson should be able to hear the world of her contact with nature for what it is and not just what it is to her human nature. Whereas light does emerge as a nonliving other in the former poem though, nature does not emerge as a nonhuman other in this one, so this world of contact is already thrown off.

By Dickinson’s figuration, nature is an instrument of sight for humans. Perceiving the world of her contact with nature for what it is means relenting that it is, in fact, an instrument of sight for the perspective of human nature, and it means acknowledging what that instrument eclipses from beyond the perspective of human nature. Dickinson’s figuration of nature as an instrument of sight unfolds in the first stanza when she recounts how it absorbed human nature the way a parallax absorbs a flame. By her comparison, nature is an instrument of sight with two points of view that submit visible objects to the effect of parallax, and human nature is one such object that is as bright as a flame. The two points of view associated with nature as an instrument of sight during Dickinson’s time belonged to natural law and biblical law. Her overall figuration of nature as an instrument of sight created by the points of view tied to each law clarifies the logic of her first line even more. It “was enough” of a challenge to listen to nature as an instrument of sight, but it was even more of a challenge to listen to it when, with her depersonalization, her human nature became the object visible through it.

Dickinson's first line is also a nod to Darwin's position that all species derived from a sole origin in nature, and what she depicts as the absorption of human nature in nature bears the influence of Asa Gray's review of Darwin's *Origin* in the *Atlantic*.⁸⁵ Like Dickinson, Gray saw human nature moving between and becoming absorbed in nature as an instrument of sight with the same points of view. When nature was an instrument of sight tied to biblical law, humans belonged to one species, and when nature was an instrument of sight tied to natural law, humans belonged to several species. Gray posited that the "unihumanitarians" with the former view of human nature "would have been right several thousand years ago," that the "multihumanitarians" with the latter view of human nature "will be [right] a few thousand years later," and that all such views of human nature will remain debatable, seemingly submitting human nature to movement and absorption as in Dickinson's poem, as long as the points of view that comprise "Nature" remain contentious among and beyond naturalists (111).

In the margin below the word, "Parallax," Dickinson wrote the word, "Firmament," and per this variant, the comparison of human nature's absorption in nature to a flame's absorption in the effect of parallax is extended to a flame's absorption in the conduit from earth to heaven known as the "Firmament." In this case, human nature's absorption in nature operated not by the effect of parallax but by the path of the firmament from earth to heaven, where life after death was promised by the Bible. If the firmament was a vanishing point for this flame, so it was for human nature. As it does on the page of this poem, the world of contact with nature as an instrument of sight with one point of view tied to biblical law lingered in the margins of discussions regarding nature during Dickinson's time. Critics like Hitchcock adhered to nature as an instrument of sight with a point of view tied to biblical law, especially as the influence of Darwin lent nature another point of view tied to natural law. Still, Hitchcock argued that

everything in nature as well as nature itself was a portal to beholding the work of special providence under biblical law. Even when the point of view tied to natural law gained attention, few people could dispose of the one tied to biblical law altogether.

Having been personified into contact with nature as an instrument of sight in stanza one, human nature becomes, in the second stanza, “just aware” of itself as an object of sight. Since nature is not really a nonliving other but an instrument of sight, this line brings the poem’s world of contact into focus even though such contact itself risks non-focus. Although she was originally trying to hear nature as an other, Dickinson was left hearing, and perhaps even stuck only hearing, the world of contact between her human nature and its own image through nature. To this awareness was “added” what Dickinson describes as a “Divine / Brief struggle for capacity,” whereby the struggle to hear nature had officially given way to the struggle to see her own human nature. Although it was impossible to see her way out of this struggle while nature was an instrument of parallax sight, her descriptors “Divine” and “Brief” suggest two other ways out. Given the descriptor “Divine,” she could gravitate towards nature as an instrument of sight with one point of view tied to biblical law, the one addressed in the poem’s margin on this page. It was not a struggle to see human nature through this point of view, especially if one was devout. With the turn of a page though, the descriptor “Brief” suggests that she might be able to hear her way out of this struggle. While the struggle is rendered visually as human nature’s movement between and absorption in the two points of view comprising nature, the very resonance of this struggle is palpable to a practice of listening rather than a practice of seeing, especially the practice of listening that Dickinson uses in her human nature poems. “Resonance,” says Veit Erlmann, “is of course the complete opposite of the reflective, distancing mechanism of a mirror” (9-19). Because it is registered by a practice of listening that merges subject and

object, resonance, explains Erlmann, “entails adjacency, sympathy, collapse of the boundary between perceiver and perceived” (10). As Dickinson’s practice of listening to the resonance of this struggle collapses the boundary between her personified human nature and its image through nature, her echo shifts from past- to present-tense delivery. “The power to contain,” she states, “Is always as the contents.” By listening to the resonance of the struggle to see human nature’s image through nature, she hears what’s wrong with this struggle.

In the poem about light, the word “content” refers to the content of non-speech in the world of contact between human nature and light, and in this poem, the word “contents” refers to the contents of struggle in the world of contact between human nature and its own image through nature. As Dickinson echoes this world from beyond the perspective of human nature, the depersonalization that deepened her listening is sustained, and she perceives the contents of struggle in this world for what they are. They are *only* what they are to human nature’s perspective. This struggle wouldn’t exist in a world made speakable at the expense of human nature, so hearing her way out of this struggle means listening to something else. It means going back to her attempt to hear nature. After having relented that nature was an instrument of sight for humans, she aims to acknowledge what that instrument eclipses by trying to hear nature as the other after all. “But give a Giant room,” she says, “And you will lodge a Giant / And not a smaller man.” While stuck in the world speakable through human nature, Dickinson is telling herself and her reader to make room for the “Giant” that is a placeholder for nature. If the “smaller man” that is human nature’s image through nature no longer eclipses the “Giant” that is nature itself, then the world speakable through human nature will no longer eclipse the world speakable at the expense of human nature. This poem’s close-up of her depersonalization remains open to the panorama of that latter world. By listening for the “Giant” that is nature

rather than struggling to see the “smaller man” that is human nature’s image, she honors the presence of nature and the world of contact shared with it.

When Dickinson tells herself to “give a Giant room,” the close of her poem recalls the close of Gray’s review of Darwin’s *Origin* when he tells his readers, as much as himself, to give Darwin’s theory of succession “room enough for improvement” which can “always work for good” (111). While Dickinson’s lines assign what can’t be heard yet to a real placeholder that is present if not perfectly audible to her, Gray’s lines assign what can’t be heard yet to a future that is not present and so not yet audible to anyone. Like Dickinson in her poem, Gray in his review is engaged in the struggle of seeing human nature through nature, and the struggle is eclipsing the opportunity to encounter nature itself as an other, the very encounter that fed Darwin’s theory. The fact that Gray waylays the resolution of this struggle to the future suggests that he resisted or couldn’t fully embrace human nature’s status as a trace of its own changeability, but this resistance or hesitation made him the ideal spokesperson for Darwin’s *Origin* as he adeptly appealed to a readership that mostly partook in similar second-guessing. In *The Book that Changed America*, Randall Fuller tells the story of how Gray shared the book widely with friends, including prominent fellow New Englanders. Despite the appeal of evolutionary theory, it was hard even for Gray to accept the parts of it that “removed providential design from the universe and demoted human beings to the status of animals” (Fuller 245). Stuck in the “struggle for capacity” described in Dickinson’s poem, many *Origin* readers struggled to see human nature as it moved between and got absorbed into nature as an instrument of sight with points of view tied to natural and biblical law. If the resolution of this struggle couldn’t be achieved by adopting one point of view, then, by Gray’s logic, it could be assigned to the future. Otherwise, by

Dickinson's ear, it could be assigned to contact with the "Giant" that was a placeholder for nature.

The "Giant" that is a placeholder for nature in the poem beginning "I thought that nature was enough" seemingly becomes what human nature dotes on but cannot detect in a poem written nearly five years later in 1877 that begins "How Human Nature dotes." With the first two lines, Dickinson has already deepened her practice of listening to the undetectable through her depersonalization. Her first-person voice is absent, and her human nature is personified to dote "On what it cant detect." Listening for the undetectable is different than listening to light as an other though, and it is also different than listening to nature as an instrument of sight. Listening to the undetectable results neither in hearing the undetectable as an other nor in hearing the world of contact between her human nature and the undetectable. Instead of being left hearing this world with the chance to echo it from beyond the perspective of her human nature, Dickinson is left trying to understand "How Human Nature dotes / On what it cant detect." Almost like options that can be taken or dismissed depending on whether they'll help her hear the undetectable or at least the world of her contact with it, each stanza differently elaborates "How" human nature *can* dote. While the first two stanzas answer "How," the last one questions "How." The poem reads:

How Human Nature / dotes

On what it cant / detect –

The moment that a / Plot is plumbed

It's meaning is extinct –

["import" below "meaning"]

["Prospective is extinct." below "import"]

Prospective is the / friend

Reserved for us / to know

When Constancy is / clarified

Of Curiosity –

Of subjects that / resist

Redoubtablist is this

Where go we –

[end page]

Go we anywhere

Creation after this?

Across Dickinson's human nature poems, what human nature is personified to do becomes emblematic of how the world of contact with what or who is other might be perceived according to the perspective of human nature. As human nature "feels" light in the poem beginning "A Light Exists in Spring," that feeling becomes emblematic of wanting the world of contact with the light to include speech. Still, non-speech prevails. Once human nature "came" into view in the poem beginning, "I thought that nature was enough," then that emergence became emblematic of wanting the world of contact with its image through nature to be clear – free of the error of parallax. Instead, the "struggle for capacity" prevails. As human nature "dotes" in this poem, that doting becomes emblematic of wanting the world of contact with the undetectable to be, at least, palpable. Nonetheless, when this world is made palpable through "Plot" in the first stanza and through "Prospective" in the second stanza, such palpability also spells its depreciation. In the device of a "Plot," any "meaning" that might have existed in this world becomes "extinct." By adding "Import" and "Prospective" as variants for "meaning,"

Dickinson emphasizes how this extinction of meaning will not reopen to additional or future meaning. In the future of “Prospective,” the meaning in this world is not extinct, or at least not extinct yet. Instead, it is “Reserved for us to know / When Constancy is Clarified / Of Curiosity.” Depreciated in the device of “Plot” and the future of “Prospective,” the world of contact between human nature and the undetectable seems unreal.

Dickinson’s last stanza refers to the “subjects” that “resist” the depreciation of the world of contact between human nature and the undetectable in either plot or prospective – not as a means of ignoring this world but as a means of valuing it. “Of” them, she writes, “Redoubtablist is this.” With “this” referring to how the depreciation of this world is also the unreality of it, the word “Redoubtable” exerts criticism of that depreciation and discloses anxiety about its unreality. Effectively deviating from the function of the first two stanzas as answers to how human nature dotes on the undetectable, Dickinson’s third one questions how it does so with closing lines that span the bottom of the poem’s first page and the top of the poem’s second page. Dickinson’s other human nature poems are the key to reading this one. Granting that what human nature is personified to do becomes emblematic of the perspective of human nature, lines divided by page breaks become emblematic of moving from the world speakable through human nature to the one speakable at the expense of it. While her first-person voice returns in these lines, she can neither echo a world that she does not hear nor echo it from beyond the perspective of her human nature. Speaking to maintain rather than compromise the depersonalization that deepened her listening, she moves from questioning how human nature can dote on the undetectable in the world speakable through human nature to questioning how it can do so in the world speakable at the expense of it. The last line at the bottom of the poem’s first page enlists this question to the former world; “Where go we,” she asks. And the final lines at the top of the

poem's second page answer that question by enlisting it to the latter world: "Go we anywhere / Creation after this?"

Questioning how human nature can dote on the undetectable in the world speakable at the expense of human nature means listening for "Creation." "Creation" acts as a placeholder for the world of contact between human nature and the undetectable in the same way that "Giant" acts as a placeholder for nature as the other in the poem above. Making room for a "Giant" let Dickinson hold space for nature as the other and honor the presence of the world of her contact with nature, especially as it becomes the world of her contact with the undetectable here. Certain that this world is present if not palpable, she resists the depreciation of it in the device of plot and the future of prospective and makes room for "Creation" as the sonic space of this world, which may sound as quiet as the non-speech in the poem beginning "A Light Exists in Spring." Dickinson's other human nature poems have already exposed how all natures remain changeable in the erasures of depersonalization for human beings and, recalling the poem beginning "Banish Air from Air," the erasures of "Banish[ment]" and "Divis[sion]" for nonhuman beings. This one exposes how the world of contact itself between human nature and what or who is other remains changeable in the erasures of this present "Creation." As described in the letter to her friend Humphries, the moment when it seems like "old things are engrossing" and "new ones are not revealed" is also the very moment when "there now is nothing old, things are budding, and springing, and singing" (L 35). "Creation" is the world speakable at the expense of not just human nature but all nature, whether detectable or not.

Like Dickinson's poem beginning, "I thought that nature was enough," this one nods to Gray's review of Darwin's *Origin*. When Gray marvels at how physical science is "tracing connections where none were known before," he is praising efforts to, as Dickinson puts it, dote

on the undetectable (112). Still, Gray is also aware that making these connections palpable into theory spells their depreciation. Aware that the depreciation of these connections in Darwin's theory "discomposes us," he admits: "Several features of the theory have an uncanny look. They may prove to be innocent: but their first aspect is suspicious, and high authorities pronounce the whole thing to be positively mischievous" (116). Eager to overcome the depreciation of these connections in a theory that could not but draw from the device of plot and the future of prospective, Gray invites readers to question these connections with a deep awareness of their "prejudices," of Darwin's "new and strong arguments," and of "the principal reviews" of his *Origin*. Much like the end of Dickinson's poem, this is an invitation to question how these connections are made in the world speakable through human nature.

While Gray doesn't overtly answer that question with a question about how these connections might be made in the world speakable at the expense of human nature, he does lead into this line of questioning with a similar invocation of creation. He imagines Darwin's theory "march[ing]" boldly on, follow[ing] the supposed near ancestors of our present species farther and yet farther back into the dim past, and end[ing] with an analogical inference which "makes the whole world kin" (116). While it almost seems like Gray is walking us back to creation as the origin of species, which he has already done in this review, his reference to Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* suggests another direction or immersion. When Ulysses tells Achilles that "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin," he is identifying present creation as a unifier. "The present eye," Ulysses goes on, "praises the present object." With this reference, Gray imagines Darwin's theory claiming its context in present creation. The theory's most difficult connections remain difficult because, like the world of Dickinson's contact with the undetectable, they remain changeable in the erasures of creation. Gray's reference to Ulysses

also reminds us that it's not easy to reconcile the present state of any one connection with the changeability presaging and surviving it in these erasures of creation. Without quite adopting the depersonalization that can deepen listening, this invocation of creation is as close as Gray comes to a world speakable at the expense of human nature as well nature. He imagines the world of his contact with all of science's new connections, with what cannot be detected, but he doesn't quite do so from beyond the perspective of human nature.

For Gray, there is no reason to exceed the perspective of human nature because it is source of the "the delirious yet divine desire to know" (112). And yet, this is exactly why Dickinson aims to exceed it in her human nature poems. In the poem beginning "A Light Exists in Spring," the perspective associated with human nature may find Dickinson wanting to hear light speak, but suspending that perspective helps her hear non-speech in the world of her contact with the light. In the poem beginning "I thought that nature was enough," the perspective associated with human nature may find Dickinson wanting to see human nature through nature, but her suspension of that perspective helps her hear her way out of this struggle to see, and it also helps her listen for the "Giant" that is nature. Finally, in the poem beginning "How Human Nature dotes," the perspective associated with human nature may find Dickinson wanting to hear the undetectable, but suspending that perspective helps her accept the changeability of the world of her contact with the undetectable in the erasures of Creation.

Because each poem moves from the world speakable through human nature to the world speakable at the expense of human nature, it's likely that the perspective of human nature may be the unattributable "it" that Dickinson "cannot want" either "more" or "less" in the poem beginning "I cannot want it more," which was written within a year of the poem beginning "I thought that nature was enough." She cannot want her human nature's perspective more because

it is the source of that desire to know, but she cannot want it less because it can get in way of what she might get to know. If the perspective of human nature is this poem's unattributable "it" at the beginning of the first quatrain, then it also serves as the unattributable "this" at the end of the first quatrain wherein "Human Nature's fullest force / Expend itself on this." When Dickinson's depersonalization entails personifying her human nature into contact with what or who is other, the perspective of her human nature is exposed, but over the course of that contact, the perspective – as well as the force – of her human nature is expended. Thus, she echoes the world of her contact with the other from beyond the perspective of human nature. The poem reads:

I cannot want / it more –
 I cannot want / it less –
 My Human Nature's / fullest force
 Expend itself / on this.

And yet it / nothing is
 To him who / easy owns –
 Is Worth itself / or Distance –
 He fathoms who / obtains.

Dickinson's human nature poems situate her listening in the world speakable at the expense of human nature, and from this world, her depersonalization orients her listening into every possible direction. This poem's second and last quatrain finds her listening back to the world speakable through human nature for just a moment. In it, she acknowledges that the perspective of human nature, or "it," is "nothing" to someone who "easy owns" it. It is neither something definitively

possessed nor relinquished. To determine or “fathom” the worth of this perspective though, it must be more than nothing. It must be “obtain[ed].” Then, one can deem it “Worth itself or Distance.” When it’s worth “itself,” it’s worth owning, however difficultly, and when it’s worth “Distance,” it’s worth disowning, even willfully so. As human nature remains changeable in the erasures of depersonalization, its perspective may be difficultly owned at turns and willfully disowned at others, making it worth both itself and distance.

The way that Dickinson’s depersonalization esteems the worth of human nature has something in common with the way Levinas’s “Work” esteems the worth of humanity as one of the legacies of human nature. For Dickinson, depersonalization in the face of what or who is other makes it possible for her to deepen her listening. For Levinas, on the other hand, “Work” in the face of the other makes it possible for subjects to register “the epiphany of the Other,” which he calls “Saying” (*Humanism* 28). What Dickinson’s depersonalization is to Levinas’s Work, her listening is to his Saying. With deepened listening, Dickinson may not always hear the other but she does hear the world of her contact with the other. With Saying, Levinas’s subject gains a “sense” of the other that is essential as well as ineffable (*Humanism* 26).⁸⁶ Dickinson’s world of contact with the other and Levinas’s sense of the other are not audible in the same way though. Dickinson’s world of contact is audible to her listening and in her echo of it. Levinas’s sense of the other is audible only to Saying, which is a kind of “speaking;” because this speaking that is Saying operates by significance, it is distinct from the speech that is Said which operates by signification (*Humanism* 55).⁸⁷ The sense registered by Work in Saying is prohibited from the Said, so it keeps residence in Saying where it will justify humanity’s worth by way of eschatology. The highest utility of Saying, explains Levinas, is “patience” for “triumph in a *time without me*,” and it is earned by “setting sights on this world without me, setting sights on a time

beyond the horizon of my time: eschatology without hope for self or liberation with regard to my time” (*Humanism* 26). The world registered by depersonalization in listening is not prohibited from the echo, so it finds residence in both Dickinson’s listening and her echo, where it continually justifies the degree to which human nature is worth itself and distance by way of changeability. The highest utility of her listening is, to borrow Levinas’s phrasing, patience for triumph in a *world speakable at the expense of human nature*. Further adapting Levinas’s phrasing to Dickinson’s case, triumph is earned by *lending an ear to this moment despite human nature, lending an ear to a world beyond the perspective of human nature’s world: changeability with hope for human nature and liberation with regard to this world.*⁸⁸

Human Nature Changes:

“The sagest time to dam the sea / is when the sea is gone —”⁸⁹

Distinct from its liberation through eschatology, human nature’s liberation through changeability *is* locatable in the world speakable at the expense of human nature. Dickinson’s panoramas of this world almost belie the odd close-ups of depersonalization that make them possible. The lasting impressions left by her human nature poems rely less on the initial evacuation of her first-person voice and the personification of her human nature in depersonalization. Instead, these lasting impressions rest with profundity in the panoramas of the worlds of contact that she echoes from beyond the perspective of her human nature wherein “loss” is not measured by the desire of a gain, room is made for the “Giant” that is nature, and in cases when a lasting impression has no particular world of contact to rest on, it defers to “Creation” where one such world is inevitably materializing. We don’t always get evidence of

what a documentary photographer or soundscape artist goes through to bring a new world our way, especially when that world is hard to get to, but Dickinson's human nature poems show us the close-ups of her depersonalization that endow the panoramas of these worlds speakable at the expense of human nature. Even if the impression of her echo is more lasting, Dickinson's human nature poems meet the challenge of sustaining depersonalization through her listening into the speech that is her echo.

Her sea poems, however, pick up where her human nature poems leave off. In her sea poems, the impression of listening that is symbolized by her contact with the sea is more lasting than the impression of speaking, which is symbolized by her having touched ground. In the poem penciled around 1872 beginning "Because my Brook is fluent," the brook is the other that Dickinson is echoing in the first two lines. This brook is "fluent" because it she can hear and echo either the sonic space of belonging shared with it or the world of her contact sans belonging with it.⁹⁰ Describing it as "fluent" yet "dry," her ability to echo the brook is symbolized by touching ground. In the poem's next two lines though, the brook is "silent" much like the light she listens for in the poem beginning "A light exists in spring." Because it is silent, the brook is the other that Dickinson is still listening to. Calling it "the Sea," her attempt to listen is symbolized by that very sea, an attempt that she unravels in the second stanza. The poem reads:

Because my / Brook is fluent

I know 'tis dry –

Because my / Brook is silent

It is the Sea –

And startled at / it's swelling

I try to flee

To where the / Strong assure me

Is 'no more Sea' –

While attempting to listen to the silent brook that is the sea, Dickinson becomes “startled” when it “swell[s].” She even tries “to flee,” which can be equated with trying to stop listening to the sea by, per the first stanza, speaking instead. Per the poem’s final lines though, she can also try to stop listening to the sea by listening to the speech of the “Strong” where, as they say, there “Is ‘no more Sea.’” The poem ends with Dickinson’s reference to the speech of the strong, but her dash cycles readers right back to the beginning of the poem where Dickinson’s own speech brings her to the brook that is dry land, and her own listening brings her to the brook that is the Sea. The poem’s closure, if we can call it that, or lasting impression is in the center moment of listening to this brook that is the silent sea.⁹¹

Dickinson’s sea poems assume total depersonalization and exhibit the cycle from speaking back to listening as one that never ends – one ever mobilized towards listening, however difficult. Her human nature poems may begin with the difficulty of listening and posit resolutions to it in speech, and while many such resolutions are simply commitments to listening, her sea poems promise that every such resolution must be a return to listening. Written in 1863, her poem beginning “As if the Sea should part,” exhibits the collective breadth of this cycle from speaking to listening.⁹² In the first stanza, the sea that is associated with her listening parts itself to make way for the ground that is associated with her speaking – the ground of the world speakable at the expense of human nature. Each time the sea parts itself for the ground of this world though, it also “show[s] a further Sea” or another world that must yet become

speakable. After parting occurs three times, the fact of a further sea as another world that must become speakable is “But a Presumption.” The poem reads:

As if the Sea should / part
 And show a further Sea –
 And that – a further – and / the Three
 But a Presumption be –

 Of Periods of Seas –
 Unvisited of Shores –
 Themselves the Verge of / Seas to be –
 Eternity – is Those –

“Of Periods of Seas,” or of the periods of these worlds that had to be made speakable and that must yet be made speakable, are shores that are “unvisited” because they were made speakable in the past, are being made speakable by creation in the present, or are yet to be made speakable in the future. Gathered into periods, these unvisitable shores are “Themselves the Verge of / Seas to be.” In Dickinson’s last line is a move equivalent to giving nature as the other a placeholder called “Giant” and giving the world of her contact with the undetectable a placeholder called “Creation.” Here, Dickinson gives the collective breadth of all these seas, which are also the worlds that can become speakable in this cycle from speaking to listening, a placeholder called “Eternity.”

With implicit depersonalization, speech in Dickinson’s sea poems not only endows further listening but does so in all directions. For Dickinson the poet, speech itself seems to motivate a hind-listening akin to the hindsight that is discernible in all the poems marked by

continuous revision and variation, and it seems to inspire a kind of fore-listening akin to the foresight discernible in the sensibility of her poetic ear. Recalling the connection of belonging that she hears in the large acoustic states of radical belonging discussed in chapter one of this dissertation and then in the smaller dynamic connections of shared consciousness discussed in chapter two of it, we can accept that they are organizations *in* but not organizers *of* the world that she echoes or speaks to here. And in these organizations of belonging, we can read for her practice of listening as it ensues and deepens and, at different times, registers some connection of belonging with another, registers the world that connects her to another without belonging, or registers the creation that is a placeholder for this world itself. A broad application of this listening to all Dickinson's poems may explain why her experience of belonging is so open to nonhuman and nonliving others and why the limit of her experience of nonbelonging is an opening to the world that contains and exceeds them all.

In lieu of any organization of belonging though, this world is the only one to which she can and may ever speak. And because any organization of belonging exists in this world, whether robustly or frailly, her echo of one of those organizations does not preclude her echo to this world. In the last stanza of her "letter to the World" poem, she acknowledges this world with a request:

For love of Her – Sweet – country –

Men –

Judge tenderly – of Me⁹³

Dickinson's human nature poems teach us how to "Judge tenderly" her echo of this world that, by becoming her audience, makes her its poet. Her echo puts the world to which one can speak ahead of any impulse to speak. Shifting the burden of ethos to the burden of pathos, Dickinson

invites us to reconsider the adage that we should speak *from* the heart or experience and, without discounting or replacing it, to embrace how we might speak *to* the world beyond claim – *to* the world audible at the limit of heart or experience. Put another way, Dickinson shows us how speaking to, or echoing, this world from beyond the perspective of human nature is a way of speaking from the heart and the experience that is not only human.⁹⁴ Beyond this lesson in speech, though, is a larger lesson in listening. Her sea poems teach us how to “Judge tenderly” her echo of all the worlds that, by remaining her audience, retain her as their listener. Her echo keeps all the worlds to which one can speak ahead of any impulse to speak because the impulse is, always, to listen.

Conclusion: When They Were Fire

Long Years / apart – can / make no

Breach a / second cannot / fill –

The absence / of the Witch / does not

Invalidate / the spell –

The embers / of a / Thousand / Years

Uncovered / by the Hand /

That / fondled / them / when / they / were / Fire

Will gleam / and / understand

Line 3: [“a” inserted above “the”] [“cannot” above “does not”]

Line 4: [“a” inserted beside “the”]

-Emily Dickinson⁹⁵

Introduction:

“Of all we are allowed to hope”⁹⁶

The subtitle of this dissertations is: “A Listener’s Reconceptualization of Citizenship, Consciousness, and the World,” but for a while, I thought it might just as easily have been “A Listener’s Reconceptualization of Earth, Air, and Sea.” After all, it is on the earth that Dickinson

echoes the democratizing voice of citizenship. It is in the face of the air that she echoes the embodied being of shared consciousness. And it is on the sea, as well as the verge of seas to be, that she echoes the world perceivable at the expense of human nature. The subtitle as it stands is right, though, because we should reconceptualize citizenship, consciousness, and the world through these elements rather than try to reconceptualize these elements through our own concepts. To be clear: in Dickinson's echology, it is the elements – earth as common ground, air as nonhuman other, and sea as bidder for listening in all directions – that make possible the decapitalization of Voice, Being, and Echo. Once the democratic Voice of national citizenship un.masks our democratizing voice of earthen citizenship, then citizenship itself can be reconceptualized. Once the cognitive Being of sovereign consciousness un.masks our embodied being of shared consciousness with, first and foremost, the air, then consciousness itself can be reconceptualized. And once the Echo of the world speakable through human nature un.masks the echo of the world speakable at the expense of human nature, which cycles our speech on land back to our listening on sea, then the world itself can be reconceptualized. Only as these elements make possible each decapitalization do they make possible our reconceptualization of citizenship, consciousness, and the world. And it is also only through these elements that a fourth element – fire – claims our attention as it resides in the hands of Dickinson as a poet and of us as readers who cannot help but come to the lyric after having read hers.

In this dissertation's final chapter, we were exposed to some of this fire in Dickinson's hands. In the poem beginning "Peril as a Possession," we found Dickinson positing how awe, like introspection, can turn one inward, and inward, such awe can "search Human Nature's creases / As clean as Fire." Contextualized by the erasures of depersonalization in Dickinson's human nature poems, I read the comparison of awe to fire – and awe as a form of fire – in terms

of its possible illumination of human nature as a trace of its own changeability in moments past; its possible sparking of human nature as a trace its own changeability in the moment present; or its possible illumination of human nature as a trace of its own changeability in moments past and its possible sparking of human nature as a trace of its own changeability in the moment present all at once. When it “searches Human Nature’s creases / As clean as Fire,” we understand that awe is a form of fire that resides in our hands only to illuminate and spark human nature as a trace of its own changeability in balance with the earth that hosts us, the air that faces us, and the sea that keeps us listening.

This fire will find more than the creases or traces of human nature though. If awe as a form of fire can illuminate and spark human nature as a trace of its own changeability in balance with earth, air, and sea, then in and out of such awe, this fire can also illuminate and spark the products of human nature – notably, in this case, Dickinson’s lyric. It’s possible to say that the fire in human hands is what prompts the lyric at all. Of the many definitions for “fire” in Dickinson’s 1844 *Webster’s Dictionary*, two of them encompass what it means to hold fire. According to definition 7, fire is “That which inflames or irritates the passions,” and Webster includes the following quote by Shakespeare: “What *fire* is in my ears?” (678). According to definition 9, fire is “Liveliness of imagination; vigor of fancy; intellectual activity; animation; force of sentiment or expression,” and Webster includes the following quote by Pope: “And warm the critic with a poet’s *fire*” (678). To hold fire as a listener who will speak is to understand the risk of becoming a speaker who will listen; it’s to know that our voice, being, and echo are always under the threat of recapitalization. If we find ourselves tempted to shift our status from a guest of the earth to a host of it, then this shift can threaten to recapitalize our democratizing voice into a democratic Voice, and our reconceptualization of citizenship will

halt. If, as hosts with such a Voice, we find ourselves tempted to face the air not as a nonliving other with whom we share consciousness but as a signal of our sovereign consciousness, then this facing can threaten to recapitalize our embodied being with the air into our cognitive Being over it, and our reconceptualization of consciousness will halt. And if, when Being is added to Voice, we find ourselves tempted to turn our ears away from the sea and the verge of seas to be and to speak our way through land, then that turn can threaten to recapitalize our echo of the world speakable at the expense of human nature into the Echo of the world speakable through human nature, and our reconceptualization of that very world will halt. For Dickinson as a poet, to hold fire is to let it find the creases and traces of the lyric, wherein it illuminates and sparks the lyric as a trace of its own changeability in balance with the earth that hosts her, the air that faces her, and the sea that keeps her listening. To hold fire is to write, return to, vary, revise, and copy her lyrics through to and ever towards that balance.

Our current occasion in the twenty-first century for apprehending Dickinson's lyric as a trace of its own changeability comes on the heels of a different occasion for apprehending it in the twentieth century. To start with the latter, our collective access to Dickinson's handwritten documents in the twentieth century became an occasion to *see* her lyric as a trace of its own changeability, and what I am referring to as this fire in Dickinson's hands was interpreted most memorably by what Sharon Cameron describes as the heteroglossic "representation of choosing not choosing" (23-24). Thereafter, the permeability of literary and textual scholarship to ecocriticism, phenomenology, posthumanism, and more has become an occasion to *hear* Dickinson's lyric as a trace of its own changeability, and what I am referring to as this fire in Dickinson's hands can be interpreted, as it is in this dissertation, as the acoustic representation of an elemental balance that lets her echo – and keeps her echoing – the world. Even in a world

where the collective fire in human hands may be decidedly out of balance with the elements, we can hear how Dickinson holds her own personal fire in balance with the elements to echo the world and, at times, that very imbalance. We can hear it when we hear her echoes returning her to listening and returning, themselves, to listening even as we can see it when we see her choosing not choosing. Just as Dickinson returns to listening, her lyric returns to listening. Her lyric is a trace of its own changeability that we can see and hear and vice versa, though doing so simultaneously can be a challenge.

The oscillation between the lyric as a trace that we can see and as a trace that we can hear is also the oscillation of the cinder as a trace that Derrida can see and the cinder as a trace that he can hear in the phrase that “came” or “returned” to him at the end of writing *Dissemination* and that found elaboration in the structure of *Cinders*. The phrase reads: “‘there are cinders there,’ ‘cinders there are’ [*il y a là cendre*]” (*Cinders* 3). Derrida explains that the accent grave on “là” can be read by the eye but not heard by the ear. “To the ear,” he writes, “the definite article, *la*, risks effacing the place, and any mention or memory of the place, the adverb *là* ... But read silently, it is the reverse, *là* effaces *la*, *la* effaces herself, himself, twice rather than once” (*Cinders* 4). The eye may give the cinder a place and a memory, and the ear may obstruct that place and memory, but there is the reverse too: that with the eye at all, the eye in the first place, this very place and memory obstruct the cinder. We can extend this oscillation to the lyric. The eye may give the lyric a place and a memory, and the ear may obstruct that place and memory, but there is the reverse too: that with the eye at all, the eye in the first place, this very place and memory obstruct the lyric.

The cinder and the lyric have more in common than their oscillation between being a trace seen and a trace heard though. Due in part because of this oscillation, they both call out for

listeners who will speak rather than speakers who will listen. From the start, the cinder in *il y a là cendre* called out to Derrida for and as a listener. He admits: “For nearly ten years, this specter’s comings and goings, unforeseen visits of the ghost. The thing spoke all on its own. I had to explain myself to it, respond to it – or for it” (*Cinders* 4). He elaborates on the phrase through the structure of *Cinders* as the text on its recto pages comes face to face with another text on its verso pages. The recto pages feature a polylogue themed around what Derrida calls the “tension risked between writing and speech, this vibration of grammar in the voice,” where the voices marked in the page as masculine at times and as feminine at other times lose their marks when read aloud (5). The verso pages feature quotations pulled from Derrida’s other texts. Titled “Animadversions,” Derrida confirms that these quotations “all say something about the cinder” and “mingle their ashes and the word *cendre* with something else” (*Cinders* 8). What Derrida experienced in recording the polylogue and what we experience in reading it with the Animadversions is that the polylogue’s two voices “yield to still others” (*Cinders* 9). Derrida goes on: “they ‘call,’ they ‘ask for’ another voice: ‘another voice, again, yet another voice.’ It is a desire, an order, a prayer or a promise, as you wish: ‘another voice, may it come soon now, again, another voice...’ An order or a promise, the desire of a prayer, I don’t know, not yet” (*Cinders* 9-10).

The trace that is the cinder and, as we’ll find next, the trace that is the lyric, especially Dickinson’s lyric, call out for listeners because they can’t be seen in mark and heard in effacement at the same time. That Derrida insists on “mark[ing]” and “effac[ing]” the accented *à* in *là* in and beyond the phrase *il y a là cendre* while knowing that it is impossible to mark and efface it simultaneously is, as he confirms in the Prologue to *Cinders*, “the experience of cinders and song that here seeks its name” (*Cinders* 9). The trace that is the cinder calls out for listeners

who will see its mark, speak it to hear its effacement, and keep listening to the mark contextualized by its effacement. Their experience is a song that seeks the name *cinder*, and it calls for several moments of listening – moments that turn us into several listeners and/or find us with several listeners. It is no different for Dickinson’s lyric. The trace that is Dickinson’s lyric calls out for listeners who will see its mark, speak it to hear its effacement, and keep listening to the mark contextualized by its effacement. As listeners, our experience is a song that seeks the name *lyric*, and it calls for several moments of listening that turn us into several listeners and/or find us with several listeners. In both cases, there is the mark that we as listeners see on the page: the accent in Derrida’s *là*, the materiality of Dickinson’s documents. And there is the effacement that we as listeners hear when we speak it: the cinder that echoes aloud and then returns (ourselves and itself) to listening, the lyric that echoes aloud and then returns (ourselves and itself) to listening. And always, there is our continued listening to the mark in the context of its effacement. In both cases, there is a call for several moments of listening that are neither simultaneous nor linear and never solitary.

One such call for several moments of listening comes to us from the Dickinson poem that serves as the epigraph to this conclusion. Beginning “Long years apart can make no breach,” the first stanza calls for listening both to the time of “Long years apart” and to the “second” that “fills” its “breach.” When Dickinson adds that “the absence of the Witch does not / Invalidate the spell,” her validation of the spell sans the witch is a validation of a link between the time of this “second” and a past time that precedes those “Long years apart” – a validation of the mystery of connection without belonging that may follow any connection of belonging. These three moments of listening – to the long years, the second that fills their breach, and the past that lives in that second – cannot happen simultaneously or linearly or solitarily. They turn us into several

listeners and find us with several listeners. There is the mark that we as listeners see on the page: the words that denote these moments of listening despite their absence and, moreover, the likeness of their absence to a witch's absence. And there is the effacement that we as listeners hear when we speak the mark: the spell that connects these moments in the audibility of sonic and virtual space and that, thereafter, returns (ourselves and the lyric) to listening. And always, there is our continued listening to the mark in the context of its effacement.⁹⁷

There is more though, especially when we look at the document that contains this poem, which commands our attention even before we can get to the second stanza.⁹⁸

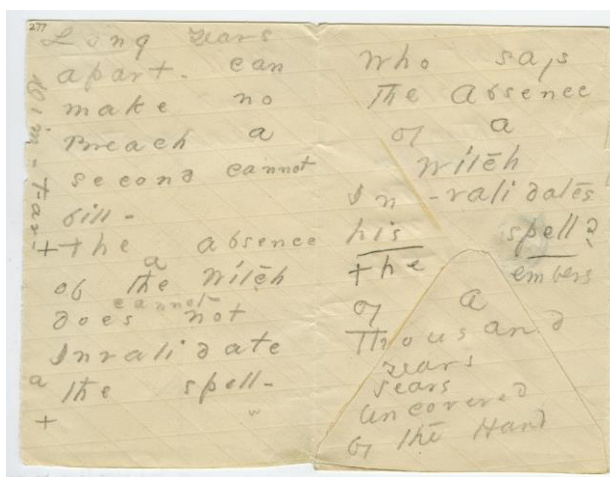


Fig. 3. AC 277, Courtesy of the Amherst College Archives and Special Collections.

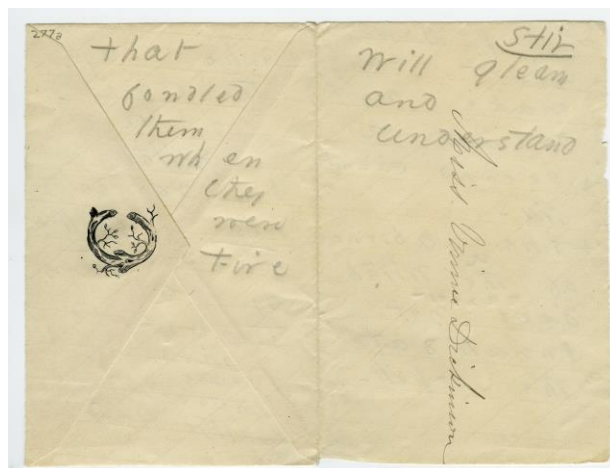


Fig. 4. AC 277 a, Courtesy of the Amherst College Archives and Special Collections.

Suddenly, there is more to the mark that we as listeners see on the page: the texture of the open envelop, the horizontally-penciled “Dim – Far –” on the left edge, the echoing variant “Who says / the absence / of a / Witch / in-validates / his / spell?,” the underlined “his” and the underlined “spell?,” the address to Dickinson’s sister “Miss Vinnie Dickinson,” the “C” stamp, and the added and underlined “still” indicating that the “embers” will “still gleam and understand.”

Without even having gotten to those embers/cinders in the second stanza yet, there is more to the mark’s effacement that we as listeners hear when we speak the mark: a spell that connects an opening, an edging, an echoing, a double underlining, an addressing, a stamping, and an adding (with a third underlining) in the audibility of sonic and virtual space and that, thereafter, returns (ourselves and the lyric) to listening. And always, there is our continued listening to the mark in the context of its effacement. We see Dickinson’s heteroglossic “representation of choosing not choosing” (Cameron 23-24) even as we hear her acoustic representation of an elemental balance that lets her echo – and keeps her echoing – the world.

As we reach the first line in the second stanza about “The embers of a Thousand Years,” we behold how these embers/cinders and the lyric itself are listening for us to listen to them as traces. A thousand years is abstract enough to equivocate the feeling of a long time over the span of an actual time, and it suggests that these traces have listened for us listeners all along. In the last line, it’s the trace – perhaps the lyric and especially these embers/cinders – that “Will gleam and understand” or “Will still gleam and understand” and not the “Hand / That fondled them when they were Fire.” The trace – likely the lyric and surely these embers/cinders – gleams with the fire that it was and understands everything that was outside this fire in the earth, air, and sea. Always, the trace – whether anyone’s lyric or any such ember/cinder – still gleams with the fire that it was in anyone’s hands and understands the balance sought, surrendered, or sundered.

In his introduction to *Cinders*, Cary Wolfe recalls how Derrida came to believe that the cinder was “‘the best paradigm for the trace’ and ‘not, as some have believed, and he as well, perhaps, the trail of the hunt, the fraying, the furrow in the sand, the wake in the sea, the love of the step for its imprint’” (qtd. in “*Cinders*” xiii). Still quoting Derrida, Wolfe reviews how the trace is “‘the intimate relation of the living present to its outside, the opening to exteriority in general’” and how it “‘impels us beyond present life...its empirical or ontological actuality: not toward death but toward a living on [sur-vie]...of which life and death would themselves be but traces’” (qtd. in “*Cinders*” xiii-xiv). While Wolfe brings the trace that is Derrida’s cinder into the realm of biopolitics to understand how the “economy of the trace and the cinder clearly extends in Derrida’s view to the question of (at least some) nonhuman beings” as well as the “question of ‘race,’” (“*Cinders*” xv-xvi), it’s possible to bring it into the realm of the lyric to understand how, in a way not unrelated to biopolitics, the experience of the trace that is the lyric can clearly extend to speak to those questions of nonhuman beings and race, but it can do so only if we balance the fire in our hands with the earth, air, and sea. Then, our listening will lead to our own echo of the world, which will return us to the listening that such an echo not only calls for but does itself. The echo will always return us to listening and, itself, return to listening, and if, as I said in this dissertation’s introduction, speaking frames us back, then as I have been hearing thereafter, listening unframes us forward.

Notes

¹ Transcription of AC 170, asc: 3566 – p. 1; Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA, in EDA; J 1538; Fr 1569 A. Unless otherwise noted, I transcribe manuscripts accessible in the EDA, acknowledge their physical location as well as their digital location in EDA, and include their publication via number in J, Fr, or L. Dickinson’s physical line breaks often differ from regular line breaks. For transcriptions of the poems proper that are inset, I honor regular line breaks but indicate physical line breaks with a slash mark (/). For transcriptions of the poems proper within the dissertation text, I indicate regular rather than physical line breaks with a slash mark (/). For this transcription, which is inset, physical and regular line breaks are the same. For other transcriptions that are inset, they will not be the same. When applicable, I have transcribed notable poem variations and marks. Note that lines from this poem appear in H MS Am 1118.5 (B 60), Dickinson’s Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA in EDA, which have been published in L 758 from Dickinson to Susan Gilbert Dickinson, about 1882; J 1538; Fr 1569 B.

² This phrase is from line 35 of Hesiod’s *Theogony*.

³ The deification of abstract nouns in Greek is common enough that scholars cannot ascertain whether this mention of echo is the phenomenon or the nymph herself. Robert Germany offers several convincing reasons for reading this reference as the nymph, and suggests that it “seem[s] improbably coincidental for the depersonalized phenomenon to turn up in a sentence describing the nymphs who constitute Pan’s entourage, especially since the verb used to describe its sound effects could not have been better chosen to fit the mournful tale later authors would tell” (188). See “Figure of Echo.”

⁴ For elaboration of these terms, see p. xi of James A. Steintrager's translator's introduction to Michel Chion's *Sound*.

⁵ Bernie Krause uses the term "anthropophony" for human sounds in distinction from the terms "geophony" for biological sounds that are not natural and "biophony" for collective sounds by organisms in a biome (11-12). See *Voices of the Wild*.

⁶ Of Descartes, Veit Erlmann explains, "The philosopher conceived of the ear's relationship with rational mastery, knowledge, epistemological certainty, and, ultimately, the foundations of a modern subjectivity in far more ambiguous terms than a superficial reading of the *Meditations* might suggest. Having stopped his ears did not prevent Descartes from taking great pains in elucidating the properties of sound and from studying the anatomy and physiology of the ear. . . . In fact, instead of the alleged exclusion of the ear from the search for truth, Descartes philosophy enacts an uneasy truce between *cogito* and *audio*, a precarious entente between *entendre*, hearing, and *entendre*, understanding" (31). See *Reason and Resonance*.

⁷ See Erlmann, *Reason and Resonance*, especially pp. 45-47.

⁸ This phrase is from Dickinson's poem beginning "In other Motes," B Ms. Am. 1093 (110) – p. 7, Dickinson Papers, Boston Public Library / Rare Books, Boston, MA in EDA; J 1602; Fr 1664 A.

⁹ H Ms. Am. 1118.4 (340), Loose Sheets, Dickinson Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA in EDA; J1359; Fr 1394 B. See also B Ms. Am. 1093 (70) – p. 5, Dickinson Papers, Boston Public Library / Rare Books, Boston, MA in EDA; J 1359; Fr 1394 A.

¹⁰ This phrase is from Dickinson's poem beginning "It's like the Light," H 112b, Packet XX, Fascicle 10, Dickinson Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA in EDA; J 297; Fr 302.

¹¹ L 459 A from Dickinson to T. W. Higginson, 1876, p. 554.

¹² This phrase is from Dickinson's poem beginning "Echo has no Magistrate." It serves as the epigraph to this dissertation's introduction. See note 2 above.

¹³ H 131a, Packet XXIV, Fascicles 40 (part) and 34 (part), Dickinson Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Ma in EDA; J 754; Fr 764.

¹⁴ An exceptional blacksmith and gunsmith already, the very young Daniel Boone pranked a neighbor named Wilcoxon who arranged with Squire Boone to borrow one of the family's expertly-loaded rifles to hunt deer. Daniel and his lifelong friend Henry Miller removed the lead ball to fill it with six times more gunpowder and reload the rifle. Feeling guilty, they followed Wilcox while hunting to make sure he didn't get hurt and watch him run off in fear after shooting a dear with overloaded rifle. They retrieve the deer and bring it to the shocked but unshamed hunter who, Robert Morgan suggests, probably loaded his own gun thereafter. See Morgan's inclusion of the tale in *Boone*, pp. 14-16.

¹⁵ This phrase is from Dickinson's poem beginning "The Truth – is stirless," AC Fascicle 81, asc: 9962 – p. 7, Dickinson's Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 780; Fr 882A.

¹⁶ L 509 from Dickinson to Mrs. James S. Cooper, about 1877, p. 586.

¹⁷ AC Fascicle 80, asc: 12105 – p. 7, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 17; Fr 66 B.

¹⁸ AC Fascicle 80, asc: 12102 – p. 4, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 42; Fr 57 A.

¹⁹ AC 526, asc: 3213 – p. 1, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 42; Fr 57 B.

²⁰ “Of Brussels – it was not,” H Ms. Am. 1118.3 (383), Loose Sheets, Various Poems, Dickinson Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA in EDA; J602; Fr 510. “The Bee is not afraid of me,” AC Fascicle 83, asc: 8061 – p. 2, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 111; Fr 113 A.

²¹ “Unobtrusive Blossom” is a phrase written vertically downward in the lefthand margin of Dickinson’s poem beginning “Echo has no Magistrate,” which is also discussed in note 2 and 13.

²² Sharon Cameron reads Dickinson’s poem variations and reworkings as a heterglossic “representation of choosing not choosing” (23-24). See *Choosing Not Choosing*. Looking at Dickinson’s holograph manuscripts, Paul Crumbley approaches Dickinson’s poem dashes spatially rather than logically according to how poetic language is processed through heteroglossia by the writing or speaking subject; see *Inflections*, especially pp. 38-39.

²³ AC Set 90, asc: 17286 – p. 6, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA; J1004 ; Fr1004A.

²⁴ This phrase is from Dickinson’s poem beginning “The earth has many keys,” J 1775. I did not transcribe this poem.

²⁵ Paul Crumbley finds Dickinson more focused on democratic epistemology than political ideology in her alignment of citizenship with the daily practice of free will and choice, both of which anticipate participation in a democracy. See “Democratic Politics,” pp. 179-87.

²⁶ Once posthumous publication onset Dickinson’s fame, the only daguerreotype of her was relinquished by Maher, who remained devoted to the Dickinson sisters as maid and confidant until they both died. During her temporary-to-permanent employment, Maher’s disclosures to them included her desire to join her brother in California and his discouragement based on lackluster opportunity, so it’s likely that she mentioned his acquisition of citizenship in Joaquin County, CA. Likewise, Dickinson may have heard about the application for and acquisition of Hampshire County citizenship by Maher’s brother-in-law Tom Kelley, also employed at the Homestead. Murray’s “Chronology” includes dates for the significant events, including applications for and acquisitions of citizenship, for the working families in contact with the Dickinsons. See *Maid*, pp. 241-52.

²⁷ Murray locates most of this intimacy in the kitchen, where, while preparing food with house workers, Dickinson picked up their Hiberno-English and African American Vernacular English as well as their linguistic and social responses to power. See *Maid*, p. 24.

²⁸ By declaration, the economy of rights, according to Giorgio Agamben, charges the bare life of humans with the substance of the nation and the sovereign, a metonymy that is dangerous for both its inclusions and exclusions. See *Homo Sacer*, pp. 128-29.

²⁹ This phrase is from the poem beginning “After all Birds have been investigated and laid aside,” B Ms. Am. 1093 (84) – p. 1, Dickinson Papers, Boston Public Library / Rare Books,

Boston, MA in EDA; J 1395, Fr 1383 F; L 513 from Dickinson to T. W. Higginson, August 1877, p. 513.

³⁰ H 48b, Packet X, Mixed Fascicles, Dickinson Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA in EDA; J422; Fr 415.

³¹ AC set 91, asc: 11555 – p. 7, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 943, Fr 890 B.

³² For additional information on Dickinson's exposure to Emerson, especially *Essays, Second Series* read in 1850, see Karl Keller, *Only Kangaroo Among the Beauty*. For analysis of Dickinson's work in context with Emerson's essays "Self-Reliance" and "Circles," see Shira Wolosky, *Poetry and Public Discourse in Nineteenth-Century America*, especially pp. 22-25.

³³ See L 178, Dickinson to Susan Gilbert (Dickinson), February 28, 1855, p. 317.

³⁴ For Jane Eberwein's analysis of "boy figures" that includes this poem, see *Strategies of Limitation*, p. 99.

³⁵ H 167 b, Packet XXXI, Fascicle 23, Dickinson Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA in EDA; J 763; Fr 486.

³⁶ AC 887, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in RS. This document was found among the mostly extrageneric documents comprised of script across the surfaces of envelopes, receipts, telegrams, scraps, and refuse. See Werner, *Emily Dickinson's Open Folios; The Gorgeous Nothings*, edited by Werner and Jen Bervin.

³⁷ Images courtesy of the Amherst College Archives and Special Collections. They are viewable in RS as documented in note 37.

³⁸ James McIntosh reads this line as an acceptance of what cannot be known. See *Nimble Believing*, p. 159.

³⁹ The term “prey” merits comparison to other poems where hearing and hunting are aligned, as in the poem beginning “Good to hide, and hear ’em hunt,” wherein the speaker’s hope for communication that is lively yet understandable is compared to a successful fox hunt.

⁴⁰ This phrase is from Dickinson’s poem beginning “The Angle of a Landscape,” H 88 a, Packet XVI, Fascicle 25, Dickinson’s Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA in EDA; J 375; Fr 578 A.

⁴¹ AC 110, asc: 10490 – p. 1, Dickinson’s Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 1374; Fr 1407 A.

⁴² AC 293, asc: 7677 – p. 1, Dickinson’s Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 1170; Fr 1176 A.

⁴³ Here, Dickinson aligns with the “empirical holists” of the nineteenth century who, like the Humboldt-inspired Thoreau, studied pieces and parts of the world according to a changing universal whole; Laura Dassow Walls finds them differing from the “rational holists” who approached the universal whole itself as knowable (4). See *Seeing New Worlds*, p. 4. Whereas the former upheld the observational value of nature, the latter traded it for the epistemological value of nature.

⁴⁴ AC 379, asc: 3396 – p. 1, Dickinson’s Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 1107; Fr 1147 B.

⁴⁵ AC 379, asc: 3397 – p. 2, Dickinson’s Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; Fr 1147 A.

⁴⁶ AC set 92, asc: 14124 – p. 11, Dickinson’s Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 892; Fr 1069 A.

⁴⁷ See L 619, Dickinson to Mrs. J. G. Holland, October 1876, p. 648.

⁴⁸ AC 192, asc: 3335 – p. 1, Dickinson’s Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 1370; Fr 1398 A.

⁴⁹ Moved by the occasion of Emmanuel Levinas’s death, Jacques Derrida relents that our experience of death not only takes away our ability to hear someone but also our ability to expect to hear that someone, especially when our voices are not quite translatable to one another but still exchangeable between one another. The awe of having always expected to hear one another in life, more for the sake of preserving an acoustic state of radical belonging than of officializing it, is reflected in the awe of never expecting to hear one another after death. See *Adieu*.

⁵⁰ Lambert argues that these encounters that “exist outside or even before the question of hospitality, since they take place outside the laws that continue to define the boundaries of the territory, even though they often occur inside the very limits of the proper domain, native soil, or home.” See “Universal Hospitality,” p. 30.

⁵¹ J 1721; Fr 1754 A. I did not transcribe this poem.

⁵² J 1746; Fr 1764 A. I did not transcribe this poem.

⁵³ AC Set 88, asc: 3090 – p. 4, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, Ma in EDA, J 1060; Fr 989 A.

⁵⁴ This phrase is from the poem beginning “The Face we choose to miss,” H Ms. Am. 1118.3 (333), Loose Sheets, Dickinson Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA in EDA; J 1141; Fr 1293 A.

⁵⁵ This kind of seeing was championed by American transcendentalists who used what Michelle Kohler calls the “faculty of the eye” to achieve a Coleridgean fusion of “subjective thought and objective truth,” or “transcendence and epistemology” (14). Instead of leading to a particular vision, Kohler argues that this eye unlocks “a metaphorical space rife with agency, provisionality, and conflict in a nation of seers striving to see for themselves” (17). See *Miles of Stare*.

⁵⁶ AC 879, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in RS.

⁵⁷ This phrase is from the poem beginning “The Frost was never seen,” AC Set 93, asc: 8215 – p. 1, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 1202; Fr 1190 A.

⁵⁸ Though different, comedy and mourning mobilize delightful connections between subjects and that which signals their sovereign consciousness.

⁵⁹ This phrase is from the poem beginning “Her little Parasol to lift,” AC set 88, asc: 3095 – p. 9, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA; J 1038; Fr 987 A.

⁶⁰ The brain “runs within it’s Groove” in the poem beginning with the same line, H 116 d, Packet XXI, Fascicle 27, Dickinson Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA in EDA; J 556; Fr 563. The brain contains a “Blossom” in the poem beginning “This is a Blossom of the Brain,” AC set 91, asc: 11557 – p. 9, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 945, Fr 1112A. The brain is “dropped” only to leave the soul numb in the poem beginning “I’ve dropped my Brain,” AC set

88, asc: 3083 – p. 15, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J1046; Fr 1088 A. The brain is “split” from the mind’s cleaving in the poem beginning “I felt a Cleaving in my Mind,” AC set 87, asc 2838 – p. 14, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J937; Fr 867 B. The brain has “Corridors surpassing / Material [and Corporeal] Place” in the poem beginning “One need not be a Chamber,” H MS Am 1118. 3 (304), Loose Sheets, Dickinson Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge MA in EDA; J 670; Fr F407 B; see also the version of this poem in H 65a, Packet XIII, Mixed Fascicles, Dickinson Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA in EDA; J 670; Fr 407 A. The brain is “wider than the sky” in the poem beginning with the same line in AC fascicle 84, asc: 1469 – p. 6, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, Ma in EDA; J 632; Fr 598 A.

⁶¹ H 216 a, Packet XL, Fascicle 32, Dickinson Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA in EDA: J 622; Fr 688 A.

⁶² H 216 a, b, Packet XL, Fascicle 32, Dickinson Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA in EDA; J 623; Fr 689 A.

⁶³ H 219 c, d, Packet XL, Fascicle 32, Dickinson Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA in EDA; J 464, Fr 699 A.

⁶⁴ J 1745; Fr 1763 A. I did not transcribe this poem.

⁶⁵ H MS Am 118.5 (B52), Dickinson Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA in EDA; J 1268; Fr 1303 A.

⁶⁶ AC set 95; asc: 13863 – p. 13, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 1301; Fr 1228 A.

⁶⁷ See L 35 From Dickinson to Jane Humphreys, April 3, 1850, p. 93-96.

⁶⁸ Cynthia Hogue argues that Dickinson “represents” herself as a “consciousness split between two types of activities, two locations: the place from which she “speaks” (writes) and the place in which she “sees” (reads her words along with her reader)” (35). My reading of Dickinson’s depersonalization finds Dickinson engaged in a similar split between the place from which she listens and speaks (the place from which she writes) and the place in which her human nature is personified into contact with what or who is other (the place in which her human nature remains changeable). See *Scheming Women*.

⁶⁹ “A Light Exists in Spring,” AC set 86, asc: 5799 – p. 14, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 812; Fr 962 A. “I thought that nature was enough,” AC 241, asc: 8693 – p. 1, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 1286; Fr 1269. “How Human Nature dotes,” AC 223, asc: 9496 – p. 1, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 1417, Fr 1440 A. “I cannot want it more,” AC set 95, asc: 13863 – p. 13, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 1301; Fr 1228 A.

⁷⁰ “The reticent volcano keeps,” J 1748; Fr 1776 A. I did not transcribe this poem. “What Soft-Cherubic Creatures,” AC set 91, asc: 11547 – p. 13, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 401; Fr 675 A. “As old as Woe” AC 139, asc: 8394 – p. 1, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 1168; F 1259 A. “It was a quiet

seeming Day,” AC 261, asc: 14411 – p. 1, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 1419; Fr 1442 A.

⁷¹ In this debate, Edwardian “tasters” advanced the notion of “a ‘sinful nature’ prior to any exercises” and Edwardian “exercisers” denied such a nature “back of, and distinct from, sinful actions” (Holifield 359). Supported by Asa Burton, the tasters interpreted regeneration as a change in nature or taste, and supported by Enoch Pond, the exercisers interpreted it as “an immediate ‘change in the affections themselves’” (Holifield 350). See *Theology in America*. For more information about how ministers in Amherst drew from the exercise doctrine to ramp up conversions during the revival, see Vivian Pollack, *Historical Guide*, especially p. 86.

⁷² Despite the lingering obfuscation about whether regeneration changed nature or affections, from 1830s onward, Edwardians in New England agreed on the following points: 1) the “connection” of Adam’s sin to the act of sinning instead of the “imputation” of Adam’s guilt to humanity, 2) the “instantaneous change” wrought by regeneration as “the gift of the Spirit,” and 3) the need for “pure” Congregational churches through “regenerate membership” (Holifield 351). See *Theology in America*.

⁷³ Isabel Campos proposes that Thomas a Kempis’s *The Imitation of Christ* may have helped Dickinson reconcile “the incompatibility of a poetic pursuit with a spiritual practice” (57-58). Outside the “dialectic engagement” between Dickinson’s works and a Kempis’s text though, Campos argues that Dickinson rejects his conception of human nature as fallen and grace as supernatural (64). See “The Haunted House of Nature.”

⁷⁴ In her “performance reading” of Dickinson’s poems, Jessica L. Jesse argues that Dickinson portrays the convert as “a listener transformed, but seemingly unimproved, by

conversion; there is no understanding, only acceptance” (5). See “Performance as Subject and Setting.”

⁷⁵ In his study of Dickinson’s use of revival discourse, Daniel Manheim points out that the conversions of friends and family members results in “alienation” for Dickinson, and she seeks “to separate her voice from that of the converts” (382-83). See “Dickinson and the Rhetoric of New England Revivalism.”

⁷⁶ L 23 from Dickinson to Abiah Root, May 16, 1848, p. 65-68. Polly Longworth reads Dickinson’s letter to Root as suggestive of Dickinson’s fear that the Holy Spirit skipped her but also as suggestive of the influence of Emerson’s “The Poet,” which may have inspired her to reassess her “purpose” outside of conversion (345). See “Confidante Abby Wood.”

⁷⁷ AC 295; 296; asc: 2138 – p. 1, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA. The lines in this document are also associated with the poem beginning “No man saw awe, nor to his house,” AC 295; 296; asc: 2138 – p. 3, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 1733; Fr 1342 B. This poem is only available as a transcription by Mabel Loomis Todd.

⁷⁸ Wolfe concludes his chapter on Wittgenstein’s lion by comparing deconstruction according to Derrida to autopoiesis according to Humberto Maturana and Francisco Verela. Derrida approaches animal difference from the “inside out, as it were, from the originary problem of the self-reproduction of *logos* to the contingency of the trace, and Maturana and Verela [do so] from the outside in, from the originary problem of the overwhelming contingency and complexity of the environment to the autopoiesis of the self-referential organization that, by reducing complexity, makes observation possible” (93). See *Animal Rites*.

⁷⁹ Wolfe quotes Vicki Kirby to assess how the alterity of the other impacts ethics by way of the subject: “As impossible as it may seem, the ethical relation to radical alterity is to an other that is, also, me” (qtd. in *Animal* 73).

⁸⁰ In the waves of conversion during Dickinson’s lifetime, not only were Calvinists’ own human natures changing from one state to another, but human nature as a concept was changing from one state to another. According to the New Haven branch of Calvinist theology founded by Yale Divinity School professor Nathaniel Taylor, human nature was no longer a state of wretchedness or sinfulness that required conversion. Instead, human nature was a state of goodness or willfulness that enjoyed conversion. During a time that Jane Eberwein sums up as shifting from “Calvinist orthodoxy” to a “culture of revivalism” in Connecticut Valley Congregationalism, New Haven theology generated appeal if not total adoption (49). See “New England Puritan Heritage.”

⁸¹ AC set 86, asc: 5800 – p. 15, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 854, Fr 963 A.

⁸² Jack L Capps suggests that Thoreau’s appeal to Dickinson might have run deeper than her two mentions of him in her letters. For evidence, he quotes a newspaper recollection written after Dickinson’s death by her cousin Mrs. Ellen E. Dickinson: “Thoreau was naturally one of her favorite authors from his love of nature and power of description in that direction. On one occasion when a lady recently introduced in the family by marriage quoted some sentences from Thoreau’s writings, Miss Dickinson recognizing it hastened to press her visitor’s hand as she said, ‘From this time we are acquainted’; and this was the beginning of a friendship that lasted till the death of the poetess” (qtd. 119). See *Emily Dickinson’s Reading*.

⁸³ The analysis of how Thoreau and Dickinson realize the changeability of human nature in this chapter parallels the analysis of they approach abolition in chapter one of this dissertation. In chapter one, Thoreau took something from nature, the sweetness of the water lily, and posed it to the state as a symbol of the sweetness it could strive for, and with that example, he supported abolition. In this chapter, nature seems human to him, and personalizing it, it is translatable to human nature in the same way that the water lily might be translatable to the human state. In chapter one, Dickinson took something from the state, citizenship, and posed it to nature for radicalization; specifically, she metaphorically transplanted citizenship into the earth, and with that metaphor, she supported the kind of citizenship that required abolition. In this chapter, nature is not human at all, and depersonalizing herself, the world of her contact with it challenges and changes human nature in the same way that the earth might challenge and change what citizenship is to humans.

⁸⁴ These lines are from the poem beginning, “Each Life converges to some Centre,” H 120 b, Packet XXII, Fascicle 35, Dickinson Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA in EDA; J 680; Fr 724 B.

⁸⁵ Joan Kirkby identifies Gray as the inspiration behind Dickinson’s L 280 when she says, ““I was thinking, today – as I noticed, that the “Supernatural,” was only the Natural disclosed”” (qtd. in 8). It was Gray who wondered “how many times and how frequently may the origination of successive species be repeated before the supernatural merges in the natural”” (qtd. in Kirkby 8). For more information about Dickinson’s consumption and interrogation of Darwinian-influenced works, especially as they frame debates between natural and biblical law, see “Darwinizing with Emily Dickinson.”

⁸⁶ The “face speaks,” Levinas ascertained, as a “first discourse” (*Humanism* 31).

⁸⁷ In tasking the Saying with Work prior to uttering a word, Levinas’s ambition was to prevent one’s own Work (as well as the Work captured in literature) from being “brought down to the Said” and “into conjunction with its own conditions” of signification instead of significance (*Humanism* 69).

⁸⁸ My point that Dickinson’s poems associate human nature with changeability over eschatology aligns with Michelle Kohler’s point that they associate “revolution” with cyclicity over teleology; according to Kohler, Dickinson’s use of the term “revolution” becomes a way to “disrupt the nation’s embrace of such a teleological narrative and effectively deflate the exceptionalism that cast America as the promised land” (21-22). Both points find Dickinson unwilling to imagine the future at the expense of concerns present to her historical moment. See Kohler, “Dickinson and the Poetics of Revolution.”

⁸⁹ This line is from the poem beginning “We send the Wave to find the Wave,” AC 641, asc: 8659 – p. 1, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 1604; Fr 1642 A; L 934 from Dickinson to Louise and Frances Norcross, about 1884, p. 838.

⁹⁰ H 206 b, c, Packet XXXVIII, Mixed Sets, Dickinson Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA in EDA; J 1200, Fr 1235 A.

⁹¹ The circularity that locates the closure of this poem in the middle could also be read along the lines of the lack of closure that Alexandra Socarides finds in Dickinson’s elegies, which interrogate time by causing it to “loop” (98). See *Dickinson Unbound*.

⁹² H 119 a, b, Packet XXII, Fascicle 35, Dickinson Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA in EDA; J 695; Fr 720 A.

⁹³ These lines are from the poem beginning “This is my letter to the World,” H 70 a, b, Packet XIV, Mixed Fascicles, Dickinson Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA; J 441; Fr 519 A. In this poem, Dickinson gives us a clever description of how the world speakable at the expense of human nature sounds. Circulating in its sonic space is “The simple News that Nature told - / With tender Majesty.” This news is not “told” to Dickinson though. Instead, it is “told” to “Hands I cannot see.” Dickinson’s portrayal of nature as a teller of “simple News” and of its addressee as a set of “Hands” makes it seem like she is personalizing both nature and its addressee. Because she neither hears nature’s news nor sees the “Hands” that receive it though, her personalization is defeated and even cancelled out by the limits of her human nature. She personalizes nature and its addressee to expose the very problem of doing so.

⁹⁴ Marshall Sahlins conceptualizes human nature as “animality-to-be-overcome” for western societies and “humanity-in-becoming” for non-western ones (102-103). My reading of Dickinson’s human nature posits them as a resistance to the western view but not quite an adoption of the non-western one. She conceptualizes human nature as an emerging humanity that depends on its emerging animality. See *Western Illusion of Human Nature*.

⁹⁵ AC 277, asc: 12744 – p. 1, Dickinson Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 1383, Fr 1405.

⁹⁶ This phrase is from Dickinson’s poem beginning “‘Remember me’ implored the Thief!,” AC set 93, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst, MA in EDA; J 1180; Fr 1208 A.

⁹⁷ Because this poem was written on an envelope, Werner classifies it with other “envelope-poems” by Dickinson and finds many of them “enacting the ecstatic reconciliation of souls” (212). This one, she explains, “asserts the power of writing to overcome time and space, to collapse the distance dividing writer and addressee, who then recognize each other instantaneously despite revolutions in time” (212). See “Itineraries of Escape” in *Gorgeous Nothings*.

⁹⁸ Images courtesy of the Amherst College Archives and Special Collections. They are viewable in the EDA. According to the “Directory” in the edition of Dickinson’s envelope writings, *Gorgeous Nothings*, the address to “Miss Vinnie Dickinson” is in Abigail Cooper’s hand (247).

Works Cited

- Abrams, David. *The Spell of the Sensuous*. Vintage, 1996.
- Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Translated by Daniel Heller Roazen, Stanford UP, 1995.
- Bennett, Paula Bernat. *The Emancipation Project of American Women Poetry, 1800-1900*. Princeton UP, 2003.
- Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*. Harvard UP, 1995.
- Cameron, Sharon. *Choosing Not Choosing: Dickinson's Fascicles*. U of Chicago P, 1992.
- Campos, Isabel. "The Haunted House of Nature – Immanence's Infinity." *The Emily Dickinson Journal*, vol. 25, no. 1, 2016, pp. 57-82.
- Capps, Jack L. *Emily Dickinson's Reading*. Harvard UP, 1966.
- Castiglia, Christopher. *Interior States: Institutional Consciousness and the Inner Life of Democracy in the Antebellum United States*. Duke UP, 2009.
- Castronovo, Russ. *Necro Citizenship: Death, Eroticism, and the Public Sphere in the Nineteenth-Century United States*. Duke UP, 2001.
- Chion, Michel. *Sound: An Acoulogical Treatise*. Translated by James A. Steintrager, Duke UP, 2016.
- Cohen, Michael C. *The Social Lives of Poems in Nineteenth-Century America*. U of Pennsylvania P, 2015.
- Crumbley, Paul. "Democratic Politics." *Emily Dickinson in Context*. Edited by Eliza Richards, Cambridge UP, 2013, pp. 179-87.

- . *Inflections of the Pen: Dash and Voice in Emily Dickinson*. U of Kentucky P, 1997.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*. Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, Stanford UP, 1999.
- . *Cinders*. Translated by Ned Lukacher, U of Minnesota P, 2014.
- DeYoung, Ursula. *A Vision of Modern Science: John Tyndall and the Role of the Scientist in Victorian Culture*. Palgrave, 2011.
- Dickinson Emily. *The Gorgeous Nothings*. Edited by Marta L. Werner and Jen Bervin, New Directions: 2013.
- . *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*. 1958. Edited by Thomas H. Johnson and Theodora Ward, Belknap P of Harvard UP, 1997.
- . *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Including variant readings critically compared with all known manuscripts*. Edited by Thomas H. Johnson, Belknap P of Harvard UP, 1955. 3 vols.
- . *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Variorum edition, edited by R. W. Franklin, Belknap P of Harvard UP, 1998. 3 vols.
- Eberwein, Jane. *Dickinson: Strategies of Limitation*. U of Massachusetts P, 1985.
- . "New England Puritan Heritage." *Emily Dickinson in Context*. Edited by Eliza Richards, Cambridge UP, 2013, pp. 46-55.
- Erlmann, Veit. *Reason and Resonance: A History of Modern Aurality*. Zone, 2010.
- Emily Dickinson Archive: An Open-Access Website for the Manuscripts of Emily Dickinson*.
<http://edickinson.org/>.
- Emily Dickinson Lexicon*. Brigham Young University, 2007-2019, <http://edl.byu.edu/index.php>.

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Centenary edition, with a biographical introduction and notes by Edward Waldo Emerson. Houghton Mifflin, 1903-06, 12 vols.
- . *Essays: First Series*. 5th edition, J. M. Dent, 1908.
- . *Essays: Second Series*. Ticknor and Fields, 1867.
- Frost, Robert. *The Poetry of Robert Frost*. Edited by Edward Connery Lathem, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969.
- Fuller, Randall. *The Book that Changed America: How Darwin's Theory of Evolution Ignited a Nation*. Viking, 2017.
- Germany, Robert. "The Figure of Echo in the "Homeric Hymn to Pan." *The American Journal of Philology*, vol. 126, no. 2, 2006, pp. 187-208.
- Gray, Asa. "Darwin on the Origin of Species." Review of *On the Origin of Species*, by Charles Darwin. *The Atlantic*, July 1860, pp. 109-16. *HaithiTrust*, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.32106019601928?urlappend=%3Bseq=119>.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*. Columbia UP, 2008.
- Heller-Roazen. *The Inner Touch: Archaeology of a Sensation*. Zone, 2009.
- Hesiod. *Theogony, Works and Days, Testimonia*. Translated by Glenn W. Most, vol. 1, Loeb-Harvard UP, 2006.
- Hitchcock, Edward. *The Religion of Geology*. Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1851.
- Hogue, Cynthia. *Scheming Women: Poetry, Privilege, and the Politics of Subjectivity*. State U of New York P, 1995.

- Holifield, E. Brooks. *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War*. Yale UP, 2003.
- The Homeric Hymns*. Translated by Apostolos N. Athanassakis, Johns Hopkins UP, 1976.
- The Homeric Hymns*. 2001. Translated by Michael Crudden, Oxford UP, 2002.
- Jackson, Virginia Walker. *Dickinson's Misery: A Theory of Lyric Reading*. Princeton UP, 2005.
- Jesse, Jessica L. "'an orator of feather unto an audience of fuzz': Performance as Subject and Setting in Emily Dickinson's Poems." *The Emily Dickinson Journal*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2014, pp. 1-23.
- Keller, Karl. *The Only Kangaroo Among the Beauty*. Johns Hopkins UP, 1979.
- Kirkby, Joan. "'[W]e thought Darwin had thrown 'the Redeemer' away': Darwinizing with Emily Dickinson." *The Emily Dickinson Journal*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2010, pp. 1-29.
- Kohler, Michelle. "Dickinson and the Poetics of Revolution." *The Emily Dickinson Journal*, vol. 19, no. 2, 2010, pp. 20-46.
- . *Miles of Stare: Transcendentalism and the Problem of Literary Vision in Nineteenth-Century America*. U of Alabama P, 2014.
- Krause, Bernie. *Voices of the Wild: Animal Songs, Human Din, and the Call to Save Natural Landscapes*. Yale UP, 2015.
- Lambert, Greg. "Universal Hospitality." *Cities without Citizens*. Edited by Eduardo Cadava and Aaron Levy, Slought Foundation, 2003.
- Latour, Bruno. "Agency at the Time of the Anthropocene." *New Literary History*, vol. 45, no. 1, 2014, pp. 1-18.
- . *The Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*. Harvard UP, 2004.

- Levinas, Emmanuel. *Humanism of the Other*. Translated by Nidra Poller, U of Illinois P, 2003.
- . *Otherwise Than Being: Or Beyond Essence*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis, Duquesne P, 1974.
- Leyda, Jay. "Miss Emily's Maggie." *New World Writing*. New American Library, 1953, pp. 255-67.
- Loeffelholz, Mary. *From School to Salon: Reading Nineteenth-Century American Women's Poetry*. Princeton UP, 2004.
- Loewenstein, Joseph. *Responsive Readings: Versions of Echo in Pastoral, Epic, and Jonsonian Masque*. Yale UP, 1984.
- Longworth, Polly. "'And Do Not Forget Emily': Confidante Abby Wood on Dickinson's Lonely Religious Rebellion." *The New England Quarterly*, vol. 82, no. 2, 2009, pp. 335-46.
- Manheim, Daniel. "'Have We Not a Hymn?' Dickinson and the Rhetoric of New England Revivalism." *The New England Quarterly*, vol. 78, no. 3, 2005, pp. 377-406.
- McIntosh, James. *Nimble Believing: Dickinson and the Unknown*. U of Michigan P, 2004.
- Melville, Herman. *Moby-Dick: Or, The Whale*. Edited by Harisson Hayford, G. Thomas Tanselle and Hershel Parker, vol. 6 of *The Writings of Herman Melville*, Northwestern UP and the Newberry Library, 1988.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception*. 2012. Translated by Donald A. Landes, Routledge, 2014.
- Mill, John Stuart. "Thoughts on Poetry and Its Varieties." *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*. Vol. 1, U of Toronto P, 1981.

- Miller, Cristanne. *Reading in Time: Emily Dickinson in the Nineteenth Century*. U of Massachusetts P, 2012.
- Morgan, Robert. *Boone: A Biography*. Algonquin, 2007.
- Murray, Aife. *Maid as Muse: How Servants Changed Emily Dickinson's Life and Language*. U of New Hampshire P, 2009.
- Nabers, Deak. "Thoreau's Natural Constitution." *American Literary History*, vol. 19, no. 4, 2007, pp. 824-48.
- Nelson, Dana D. *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men*. Duke UP, 1998.
- Ovid. *Metamorphosis*. 1986. Translated by A. D. Melville, Oxford UP, 2008.
- . *Metamorphosis*. Translated by Charles Martin, W. W. Norton and Company, 2010.
- Pease, Donald. *Visionary Compacts: American Renaissance Writings in Cultural Context*. U of Wisconsin P, 1987.
- Poirier, Richard. *The Renewal of Literature: Emersonian Reflections*. Yale UP, 1987.
- Pollack, Vivian. *A Historical Guide to Emily Dickinson*. Oxford UP, 2004.
- Rich, Adrienne. *Selected Poems: 1950-2012*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2016.
- Sahlins, Marshall. *The Western Illusion of Human Nature*. Prickly Paradigm P, 2008.
- Schafer, R. Murray. *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*. Destiny Books, 1977.
- Sewell, Richard B. *The Life of Emily Dickinson*. Harvard UP, 1980.
- Smith, Mark M. "Echo." *Keywords in Sound*. Edited by David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny, Duke UP, 2015. 55-64.

- Socaridies, Alexandra. *Dickinson Unbound: Paper, Process, Poetics*. Oxford UP, 2012.
- Thoreau, Henry David. *Letters to Various Persons*. Ticknor and Fields, 1865.
- Tyndall, John. *Scientific Use of the Imagination and Other Essays*. 3rd ed., Longmans, Green, and Co., 1872, pp. 3-38, <https://archive.org/details/scientificuseim00tyndgoog>.
- . *Mountaineering in 1861: A Vacation Tour*. Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862, <https://archive.org/stream/mountaineeringi00tyndgoog#page/n10/mode/2up>.
- Walls, Laura Dassow. *Emerson's Life in Science: The Culture of Truth*. Cornell UP, 2003.
- . *Seeing New Worlds: Henry David Thoreau and Nineteenth-Century Natural Science*. U of Wisconsin P, 1995.
- Webster, Noah. *An American Dictionary of the English Language*. J. S. and C. Adams, 1844. 2 vols.
- Werner, Marta L. *Emily Dickinson's Open Folios: Scenes of Reading, Surfaces of Writing*, U of Michigan P, 1996.
- . "Itineraries of Escape: Emily Dickinson's Envelope Poems." *The Gorgeous Nothings*, by Emily Dickinson, edited by Marta L. Werner and Jen Bervin, New Directions, 2013.
- Werner, Marta L, editor. *Radical Scatters: Emily Dickinson's Late Fragments and Related Texts, 1870 – 1886*. University of Nebraska-Lincoln, March 2007 – 2010, <http://radicalscatters.unl.edu/>.
- Wolfe, Cary. *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory*. U of Chicago P, 2003.
- . "Cinders after Biopolitics." Introduction. *Cinders*, by Jacques Derrida, U of Minnesota P,

2014, pp. vii-xxx.

Wolosy, Shira. *Emily Dickinson: A Voice of War*. Yale UP, 1984.

---. *Poetry and Public Discourse in Nineteenth-Century America*. Palgrave, 2010.