In Chapter 4, I assess the charge that Vanessa Place and Kenneth Goldsmith—and by some odd principle of commutation, all Uncreative Writing—are racist. In this chapter, I will look at the accusation leveled by Calvin Bedient that Conceptualism is reactionary because it is marked by an inauthentic flight from affect in general and from the proto-revolutionary feeling of melancholy in particular. I will argue that Bedient is in fact wrong. In order to do this—and in order to recover some of the utopian stakes of Uncreative Writing—I will have recourse to Theodor Adorno’s particular understanding of the terms “semblance” and “expression,” Hence the title of this chapter and its play on the title of the influential Conceptualist anthology, Against Expression.

I want to begin by noticing that both Bedient and the editors of Against Expression have no trouble linking the appropriative writing of the Conceptualists with French avant-garde group OULIPO. The notion that, like the Oulipians, American Uncreative Writers use constraints only gets us so far, because their use of constraints is so different. Oulipian writing eliminates the Surrealist stress on automatism and the concomitant reliance on inspiration, but, in its purer forms, it uses constraint to demonstrate the writer’s virtuosity. Indeed, it substitutes invention for inspiration and thus places the author front and center. Unlike Uncreative Writing, it does not eliminate traditional poetic craft. Rather, as Marjorie Perloff has pointed out in a discussion of Eunoia, Christian Bök’s Oulipian exercise stresses “the melopoeic origins of lyric poetry,” its principle “that sound controls meaning.” What is more, Eunoia, though written according to a rather
strict set of ‘pataphysical restraints, is all about skill. These restraints require a poet’s quick thinking—and the book is nothing if not a testimony to Bök’s remarkable wit—to see them through.

The ironic orientalism of *Eunoia*’s first chapter is telling, because the poem begins by dreaming of profusion and of production without labor. In other words, it conjures magic. Although *Eunoia* itself belies that dream by thematizing the labor of its own production in several places, it insists on its profusion throughout. It also insists on the poet’s capacity for bringing that profusion forth. In many ways, the first section—and thus by extension *Eunoia* as a whole—reaches back to Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the fantasy of the creative word that animates “Kubla Khan:”

Hassan claps, and (*tab-dah*) an Arab lass at a swank spa can draw a man’s bath and wash a man’s back, as Arab lads fawn and hang, athwart an altar, amaranth garlands as fragrant as attar—a balm that calms all angst…Hassan asks that a vassal grant a man jam tarts and bananas, jam flans and casabas, halva, pap-padam and challah, babka, fasnacht and baklava.²

Hassan is a latter-day Kubla Khan, his own pleasures summoned into reality by mere decree. Bök’s identification of the poet with the Asian potentate and demiurge might be playful, but it is no less marked. At issue here is not so much a belief that Bök’s words will actually call forth a modern Xanadu, but rather that his demonstration of the power of invention, with an equal emphasis on both power and invention. Perhaps he is not so much competing with the Creator—as Coleridge seems to do—as with a rather sophisticated computer. Even so, the poet seems to win. Perloff notes that the project of *Eunoia*, with all its complicated constraints, “cannot be carried out by a computer: no program could readily sort out the words needed to present a prurient debauch or culinary banquet. And that, of course, is Bök’s point.”³ Uncreative Writing, on the other hand, makes the exact opposite point. Goldsmith’s *Traffic*, Place’s *Tragodia* or Robert Fitterman’s “This Window Makes Me Feel” could all be created—more, rather than less—by a computer. They all blatantly reject both melopoeia and poetic invention. They want nothing to do with craft.

The obvious link between OULIPO and Uncreative Writing lies elsewhere, in the way both forms of writing display what Adorno called Modernism’s “allergy to semblance.” Semblance (*Schein*) is an odd and awkward term in English because it carries none of the resonance that it bears in German aesthetics. In Adorno’s work, semblance—or illusion, as it
is sometimes translated—does not refer to a work’s attempt to resemble the world, but rather to the illusion that it represents a self-contained and coherent whole. As Adorno puts it, “The illusory quality of artworks is condensed in the claim to wholeness.” The work of art, made as it is of the materials drawn from a conflict-ridden and contradictory world, cannot actually constitute any genuine whole: “Aesthetically meaningful works feign a unity that cannot be fully achieved so long as society remains antagonistic.” Because Adorno was a musicologist, his strongest analogies come from music. Semblance, “form in the broadest sense,” can be best understood as desire to harmonize the materials from which the work is constructed. But as harmony can only be achieved by main force—by a kind of subjective willfulness—the dissonance that eludes harmony is in fact harmony’s truth. Thus the dialectic of modern art turns on its pursuit of this truth, on the fact that it largely “wants to shake off its semblance like an animal trying to shake off its antlers.”

One of the clearest ways to shake off the illusion that the work is a gapless totality is to demonstrate that it is a made thing, to show off its artifice and to make its procedures known: “to release the production in the product and, within limits, to put the process of production in the place of its results.” Within limits: as Adorno showed in “The Aging of the New Music,” he felt that the drive towards proceduralism could be taken too far: the flight from the illusion of a seamless totality can all too easily fall back into the thrall of domination. As in the case of a composer like John Cage, faith in process and proceduralism can mean turning over the material to the brutal demands of the world as it is and can thus act as a mere reflex of those demands. It replicates the very domination that it claims to act against. Adorno, like his teacher Friedrich Nietzsche, was a fierce critic of self-sacrifice. He did not see freedom from domination in the self-abnegation of the proceduralist, but rather the reinscription of domination and a clever self-assertion. By Adorno’s lights, composers like Pierre Boulez did not give up subjectivity; they merely made subjectivity even more capricious.

So, for Adorno, Uncreative Writing and OULIPO meet at the point where they both criticize aesthetic semblance by emphasizing procedure and artifice and by putting process and production in the place of the product. From my brief sketch of his aesthetics, it should also be clear that Adorno would not have particularly cared for either Uncreative Writing or OULIPO. Although Adorno has been correctly read as a critic of
subjectivity, his critique has often been misconstrued as denouncing subjectivity *tout court*. He did not. His target was a truncated subjectivity bent on mere survival and therefore on mere domination, a subjectivity that had completely forgotten its nature as nature. This is the argument of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and has been well summarized this way:

> The substantial interest of Adorno’s work is that his critique of enlightenment is an effort to fulfill enlightenment... True subjectivity—Adorno held—transcends subjectivity. As identity, it is the principle of domination, but it is only subjectivity that raises the critique of the domination of nature. In Hegelian terms—an origin of Adorno’s position—true subjectivity extinguishes itself in the object as memory of nature."13

In other words, true subjectivity is an achievement, one that goes beyond the boundaries of our present social and intellectual dispensation. Adorno’s thought, then, cannot be hewn to anti-humanism or post-humanism or any celebration of the object that denies the claim of the subject. In terms of art, this means that he does not accept a willed rejection of subjectivity:

> [A]ll aesthetic objectivity is mediated by the power of the subject, which brings an object [*Sache*] entirely to itself. Objectivism...thrive on the tempting ideology that one need only capitulate to the overpowering, senseless force of existence... but the overcoming of a nonexistent self is an all too comfortable course as is evident in what today’s allegedly asceticism is bringing to maturity.14

Let me make three points about this quotation. The first point is historical. As far as Adorno is concerned, the self does not yet exist. The subject is the x that marks the spot of unfulfilled potential. To discard the self, then, is to ensure that its potential is never reached. The second point is philosophical. The subject cannot be discarded in the name of the object, because the object is literally inconceivable without the subject. To imagine the object without the subject is to short-circuit dialectics. This odd recourse to positivism accepts the world as it is. The third point is just the concomitant of the second. The object is literally inconceivable without subject. So subjectivity, properly understood, does not bar the way to the object. It is, in fact, the only way to get to the object.

In the Chapter 3, I argue that Uncreative Writing makes the question of the author’s intention a central problem of the work. Like the god of the Epicureans, the author seems to retreat to a single point—the point of pure
executive decision—and in the present context, I would suggest—although Adorno would never go that far—that the act of reframing, of transposition and transmediation marks the bare minimum of subjectivity necessary for the object matter of a work to become visible. Adorno would not go that far because he believed—and here again his background in music is key—the unidirectional technological rationalization of society implied an equally univocal rationalization of aesthetic material (the notes, sounds and combinations of those notes and sounds). Accordingly, he seemed to hold that there was only one valid path for a given art in any given period, hence his attack on Igor Stravinsky’s neo-classicism. Such an approach is debatable in music, as it is in all the other arts: perhaps even more so in the other arts. Adorno was particularly uninterested in painting and sculpture and therefore ignored the different forms of rationalization, the different kinds of determinate negation that marked the heroic decades of high Modernism. Adorno, who occasionally made reference to Pablo Picasso and Paul Klee, had literally no time for Marcel Duchamp. A little closer to home, for us at least, Adorno’s touchstones for authentic writing in the twentieth century were ascetic—Franz Kafka, Samuel Beckett (to whom the Aesthetic Theory was to be dedicated) and Paul Celan—and their asceticism is driven by their distance from the kind of sloppy, cliché-ridden and kitschy raw material that is so important to writers like Goldsmith, Shirinyan and Fitterman. Adorno was dismissive of Dada and lukewarm about Surrealism. The kinds of intense and intensive pruning that he imagined to be necessary for the successful aesthetic critique of semblance are anathema to neo-Conceptualists.

I will venture the rather uncontroversial claim, then, that Adorno, while offering a fair description of the logic that drives Oulipian and Uncreative Writing, would dislike them. The OULIPO writers would seem too capricious to him, too uninterested in the demands of their material; and he would say that the Uncreative Writers draw on the wrong material for their poetry. Worse, he would say that the appropriative poets commit Cage’s sin of accepting the world as it is, rather than rubbing “objectivity” against the grain and thus allowing the material to serve what he takes as the critical task of art. “Art,” he writes, “is the effort to preserve in memory and cultivate those split-off elements of truth that reality has handed over the growing domination of nature, the scientific and technological standards that permit no exceptions”. In other words, in order to counter the technological domination of nature, the arts would make us hear what science and technology would have us forget: the voice of suffering nature.
I will come back later to this critical task of art. I will claim that while Adornian critique of Uncreative Writing might score a palpable hit, his commitment to a unidirectional rationalization of aesthetic material of art is unnecessarily limiting. In spite—and because—of its material, some Uncreative Writing does indeed allow us to hear the voice—or, as Craig Dworkin would have it, the echo of the voice—of suffering nature. By pursuing a line of an argument laid out in *Aesthetic Theory*, we can say that the Uncreative critique of semblance opens up a space for semblance’s dialectical opposite—the sound of suffering, or what Adorno calls “expression.”

Now, this will take some arguing and will take some time, particularly as Adorno’s use of the term “expression” is idiosyncratic. What is more, Uncreative Writing has vocally and polemically pitted itself “against expression.” In his introduction to *Against Expression*, Dworkin is pretty clear about what he and Goldsmith mean by their title: “Our emphasis is on work that does not seek to express unique, coherent, or consistent individual psychologies and that, moreover, refuses familiar strategies of authorial control in favor of automatism, reticence, obliquity, and modes of noninterference.” In this introductory essay, Dworkin keeps coming back to the anti-referential, anti-diegetical nature of this work. He seems to want to block all paths back to the psychology of the author. His anthology, then, stands against self-expression.

It is precisely this opposition to self-expression that motivates Bedient’s attack on Conceptualism in both its Oulipian and Uncreative forms. He launches the full-throated attack of “Against Conceptualism” in the name of all the affect that he finds missing in neo-Conceptualist literature. His provocative essay is odd because it relies on a number of easily dismissable oppositions. He writes that “concept has trumped feeling” and that “the uncreative heads effectively shook off the body.” He goes on to argue that Conceptualism marks a pyrrhic victory of head over heart, culture over biology, idea over sensation, ego over impulse, and reason over imagination. I am less interested in undoing these untenable dichotomies than I am in looking at the basic assumption that underlies Bedient’s argument. He seems to entertain the notion that affect in poetry only works its magic when it can be identified with the figure of the poet.

When Bedient writes on behalf of feeling, he is not concerned with what Sianne Ngai has called our “ugly feelings:” envy, irritation, anxiety and paranoia. (Nor does he care about others that she does not mention: humiliation, embarrassment and their concomitant, disdain). Rather, he is
interested in big game. He concentrates on vehement passions, such as “anger, fear, joy, crippling shame, jealousy, grief—emotions that bear on a vital self-regard”.\textsuperscript{19} For Bedient, though, the most important of these passions is melancholy. He writes that “[t]he least appreciated and understood of the affects is sadness or, better, melancholy, without which militancy has no prod. Melancholy may be called the ur-feeling, even the ground of feeling...We disparage it at the peril of disowning ourselves.”\textsuperscript{20} Bedient makes two crucial moves here. The first is that he elides the difference between sadness, mourning and melancholia. The second is that he claims that melancholy is the necessary precondition for militancy.

This latter assertion is counter-intuitive. After all, melancholy has traditionally been understood as an inhibitor of action, hence the equally traditional interpretation of Hamlet, “the melancholy Dane,” as a man hamstrung by dark thought. To put it in terms that are psychoanalytic rather than humoral, melancholy cannot mobilize anger into political opposition, because it is too busy mobilizing that anger to beat up on the self. Melancholy scores the lost object’s revenge on the ego for the ego’s anger at its loss: “The dead take up residence inside us; it is them we are really berating in our self-reproaches, not ourselves. We have to acknowledge, in speech, how much we have hated our loved ones. This is because they are not dead enough.”\textsuperscript{21} In fine: the primacy of the dead leaves no place for the living and the melancholic is too consumed by self-hatred to turn her anger on an unjust world. Only the therapeutic acceptance of our rage against our loss will allow us to spring into action. In the end, contra Bedient, we can say that melancholy thus constrains militancy. It does not enable it.

To be fair, Bedient recognizes that his argument is shaky. He hedges. In this way, he ends up undercutting his thesis: “Maintained on this side of depression, it [melancholy] has a self-preservative function” (emphasis added). Sadness can be maintained on this side of depression, but melancholy cannot. Melancholy is another, richer and—as Darian Leader points out at the beginning of The New Black, his suggestive Lacanian account of mourning—more useful term to designate the more extreme forms of unhappiness we call “depression.”\textsuperscript{22} In order to save his point about the self-preservative function of sadness, Bedient has to reinstate the psychoanalytically significant distinction between more-or-less ordinary sadness, more-or-less ordinary mourning and not-so-ordinary melancholia.
This brings us to a final point about Bedient’s argument, a point which illuminates the other two. Bedient, a close student of Julia Kristeva, sees poetry as a therapeutic enterprise. He is worried about our “self-regard.” His brief for melancholy is that it is self-preservative. His bill of particulars against Conceptualism is that “conceptual writing, which seems so pert and impertinent, hath really neither joy, nor light, nor help for pain” (emphasis added). Conceptualism is suspect because it is not therapeutic. It does not lighten our load. It does not make us feel better.

Bedient is both right and wrong here. As I argue in the next section of this chapter, he is correct in his sense that Uncreative Writing has offered little of what he would recognize as immediate therapeutic respite. This is because Bedient associates the affect represented in the poem with the emotional state of the poet. He indicates that works by César Vallejo, Silvia Plath, Antonin Artaud and Elizabeth Bishop are useful because they express the poets’ own emotions. We can therefore assume—though he never actually says this—that Bedient sees in the poems help for their author’s pain and therefore, through an act of imaginative identification, for the reader’s as well. The reader will view herself in the poem, will identify the poet’s emotions with her own and will be able to work through her suffering by way of this identification. Uncreative Writing, on the other hand, militates against such identifications. It underscores the distance between the reader, the author and the denaturalized object matter of the text. The emotions the text expresses are adamantly not those of the author, at least not in any direct way, and the text, by reframing the matter it reproduces, undercuts the immediate identification of the (literary, culturally invested) reader with the text. If we come back to Adorno, we might explain all this by saying that Uncreative Writing’s assault on what it sees as an all-too-easy, unmediated identification marks its attack on semblance.

For all that, we cannot assume that Bedient is correct when he claims that Uncreative Writing’s lack of self-expression makes it necessarily fall into an equally easy complicity with the world. (I say this in spite of my suspicion that Place and Goldsmith sometimes seem to accept the social divisions on which the economy of cultural goods eventually rests.) Rather, I will argue against Bedient that the representation of melancholy in Fitterman’s No, Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself raises a protest against the present dispensation precisely because it is not therapeutic. The fact that the poem is so grating and that it refuses uplift so adamantly allows it to serve the other purpose that Bedient sees for poetry—opposition, if not flat-out militancy.
A word on background first. In his four-volume poem, *Metropolis* (1994–2010) Fitterman documented, via collage and Google-sculpted mash-ups, the neo-liberal transformation of our gentrified cities and suburbs. The better part of Fitterman’s more recent work investigates the public performances of privacy, mediated through goods (everyday consumer items at the mall in *Sprawl* (2010), pharmaceuticals in *Pillbox*) and services (Facebook in *Now We Are Friends* (2012)). *No, Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself* (2014) gets rid of the pills and the mediation through consumer goods. It stays with the Internet and all the good stuff you can find on the Web. It collects comments on depression and loneliness from newspaper and magazine articles about dysthymia. It culls song lyrics from websites. It arranges what it finds in what appears to be a seamless web of emotional outpourings and constructs itself around its most frequently used word—the personal pronoun “I.” The resulting poem, as the epigraph to the book demonstrates, defines itself against James Schuyler’s great work, “The Morning of the Poem.” To make the relation clear, Fitterman self-consciously imitates Schuyler’s lineation. Unlike “The Morning of the Poem,” *No, Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself* makes for dreary reading:

You see, this is not the best time of the year for me; in fact, this is the worst. This is the time when family
And friends get together, share in the festive spirit, get excited over presents, and spend time together. This is
The time when families look forward to parties and BBQ’s and singing by the tree…I’ve never had any of that.
I think that the biggest, hardest concept to accept or understand for us as humans is that, yes, we are all these little
Separate creatures, so does our existence mean anything?

The collective speaker of the poem is tortured by cliché. In this section, this speaker has turned a hateful Christmas song—“There’ll be much mistletoeing/And hearts will be glowing/When loved ones are near./It’s the most wonderful time of the year,”—into its melancholic, polar, but no less stereotyped opposite. What is perhaps most odd about this section is that it includes barbecues in the panorama of holiday activities, as if all the family celebrations in an American year had been rolled into one, flaccid and tormenting scene of togetherness. There is no reason to doubt the
sincerity or the authenticity of the original writer’s emotions, but the high-school Existentialism (“yes, we are all these little/Separate creatures, so does our existence mean anything?”) and clichéd self-dramatization (“I have been/in the deepest well of solitude, darkness, depression”) give neither the light nor the help for pain that Bedient calls for from a poetry of self-expression. There is nothing transformative here. What is more, the text is remarkable for its flat lack of detail. When the poem says “I have a lot/Of reasons to cry,” it does not go on to explain or provide specifics. It merely says “Just all of the things in my life/that have happened,/The things that went wrong, the things that hurt me” (37).

Instead of detail, No, Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself provides repetition. Here is one index of its repetitiveness: in a book of 78 pages, the word “lonely” is used 105 times; “loneliness” clocks in at 55 times, and “sad” at 80 times. At the same time, there are relatively few objects in the poem. Books only appear eight times; televisions, seven times, trees only once and computers and flowers not at all. “I feel,” on the other hand, occurs 53 times. Whatever inflection there is, comes from the line breaks. These add little touches of intensity at the beginning and the end of the otherwise rather monotonous lines.

Let me be clear: Fitterman is not practicing high-Modernist repetition in the Steinian mode. These repetitions do not provide an education in discriminating “all the slightest variations,” as Gertrude Stein puts it in The Making of Americans. They go nowhere and thus describe an emotional fixity, one that reflects the depressive’s sense of living in an equally non-Steinian continuous present. They betray the sense of always “know[ing] the blueprint:/Past, present and future” (22). They present experience of a time that does not change [“Sorry, but every year seems/the same” (32)]. The book ends with lyrics from the song “Solitary Death in the Nocturnal Woodlands” by the black metal band Inquisition, which imagines, in a self-mythologizing, black metal sort of way, not an eternity of death as much as an eternity of dying: “In this endless extreme tomb of weeping sadness,/I am embraced by the cosmic force of night…/Dying alone in the woodlands isolated in my empire of solitary death./Total sadness, total darkness, total coldness, total pain” (78).

Given its undifferentiated repetitiveness, No, Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself can serve as a gloss on Kristeva’s description of the language of melancholics:
Let us keep in mind the speech of the depressed—repetitive and monotonous. Faced with the impossibility of concatenating, they utter sentences that are interrupted, exhausted, come to a standstill...A repetitive rhythm, a monotonous melody emerge and dominate...changing them into recurring, obsessive litanies.26

Behind Kristeva’s account is Freud’s sense that the melancholic would rather suffer narcissistic regression than relinquish the lost object. This regression allows the depressive to maintain a threatened libidinal investment in the object by transferring it to the ego itself. Kristeva in turn argues that melancholy marks the “impossible mourning” for the presymbolic “Thing,” the lost Mother.27 In order to guard this lost treasure, the melancholic stores it in the asymbolic realm of the Real, thus rejecting compensatory metaphors for this unnameable Thing.28 By refusing attachments and substitutions, the depressive can assert an ultimately catastrophic omnipotence—nothing has been lost—which cannot help but retreat into a stuttering, obsessive and oddly uninfluected form of litany.

Kristeva argues that melancholy can only be overcome through the provision of new, substitute referents for the unknown (and unknowable) losses that lie in our past. Melancholy can only be countered by making that which lies beyond or behind our language speak, however indirectly. We have to bind unspeakable affect to new objects. Melancholy needs to be taught how to tell a story. The late Renaissance defined melancholia as “sadness without cause,” that is, as suffering without an immediately apparent originary trauma.29 Without a place to begin, the depressive lives in a continuous, unchanging present, because she cannot construct a narrative. For her, the past, present and future are indistinguishable. In the therapeutic situation, then, the analyst and the patient “concatenate.” They construe narratives of loss that the patient can both live with and live by. By binding depression to language, the melancholic can begin the proper work of mourning, the articulation of grief. Art, which is made of metaphor and displacements, of concatenated images and narrative, serves this therapeutic end.

In this light, the absence of detail in No, Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself is telling. The moi qui parle, the poem’s collective speaker, has no objects to speak of. Rather, it keeps circling the place of its loss without ever figuring out what has disappeared and why (“maybe it’s all/About natural selection?” (39)). That is not to say that it doesn’t look for clues:
My future is looking bleak and my past haunts me, thinking what could have been, or wondering How my life got so messed up. I think it must be my parents’ fault for messing up Our family. If I could be granted one wish in life, it would be a “reset” button, Because I cannot figure out where my life went astray, and I would really like to know What egregious misdeed I committed to validate my life’s current status. It has to have occurred as an infant, because I have very few happy recollections Of my youth and even fewer as I grow older. (38)

Notice that the search for origins goes nowhere. The collective speaker’s disastrous life might be the parents’ fault. They messed up. Maybe they messed up the family. Maybe they messed up by messing up the family. (The line break before “our family” allows “messing up” to do double duty.) Or maybe that disastrous life might be just punishment for some “egregious misdeed” that the collective speaker once committed. If so, this action had to have taken place at a very early point, before language and before responsibility. In any event, the speaker’s catastrophe and her emotions are inexplicable.

In other places in the poem, Fitterman sutures bits from articles that look for sociological rather than psychological origins of widespread dysthymia. Taken out of context, this section culled from Jennifer Senior’s “Alone Together,” which originally appeared in New York Magazine in 2008, indicates that the fault lies with the city itself:

But on the whole, in New York City, one in three homes contains a single dweller, Just one lone man or woman who flips on the coffeemaker in the morning, and switches Off the lights at night. These numbers should tell an unambiguous story; They should confirm the common belief about our city, which is that New York is an Isolating, coldhearted sort of place. Maybe that’s why Mark Twain called it: “a splendid desert— A domed and steepled solitude, where the stranger is lonely in the midst of a million of his race.” (15, emphasis added)
The specificity of this quotation, its lack of self-dramatizing cliché and its steady anchor in the third person (in a poem whose most frequently used word is “I”) are refreshing. They give this moment a kind of explanatory authority. But notice that the poem says that the numbers should tell a story and that this story might be the reason Mark Twain called New York a “splendid desert.” In other words, it raises a doubt about the force of these numbers. And, not surprisingly for an article in New York, “Alone Together” does go on to argue that New York is not a desert. It claims that living alone does not mean that people are lonely. In fact, Senior maintains that New Yorkers are not particularly depressed or lonely at all. Of course, that conclusion does not suit Fitterman’s purpose. The melancholic task of the poem rests in proposing an explanation for sadness and then undermining it. It will seek origins that it will not or cannot find.

At another point, No, Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself proposes an economic way of understanding what the poem calls, drawing on a blog post by Emily White, “the loneliness epidemic.”30 Fitterman has lifted this section from “The sad lonely Men of Starbucks—the unemployed,” which was posted on Examiner.com by William Elliott Hazelgrove at the height of the recession in 2009:

…They sit in their comfort jeans trying to look inconspicuous. These men do not read fiction. They stare at newspapers or some jabber away at a laptop and some have the thirty-yard death stare.

They all have a deep look of shock and disbelief. When I first saw these men, I thought maybe it was a fluke,

But everyday they increased until yesterday the place was overrun. We might as well be sitting in a Union Hall.

They look like they should all be in offices. You see the hands Reaching for something to do, expressions

Trying to navigate the strange duplicity of sitting in a Starbucks in the middle of the afternoon

When the rest of the world is working. (39–40)

These men, mostly middle-aged, are “collectively just about the saddest/Sight in the world” (39) and their problem is that they have no place in our present economy. Or at least, that is the explanation that Hazelgrove provides: “They are of the middle management variety and that is something the new economy will not carry…They are now redundant men, put out to pasture too early in a Starbucks in a small town: the sad lonely men of our time.”31 Fitterman’s poem does not include these
last sentences. It concentrates on what the men look like and what they are doing, while only hinting at why they are hovering in Starbucks.

Even so, the poem does present an instance where joblessness does seem to be the traumatic cause of depression:

Lots of folks are jobless, but that doesn’t help me.
I just read that the ranks of
The unemployed now total 12.5 million people.
One of them is a guy I know
From the gym named Al. Al was recently laid off
from his job as a columnist
For a small local paper. Al was describing to me
the intense feelings of rejection
That come with sudden unemployment. I mean
the icy chill of loneliness
I’ve begun to experience, too, in a culture that seems
to be bustling on by,
Leaving me as more spectator than participant. (28–29)

That is just one moment in the poem, though. For most of No, Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself, it is hard to tell if joblessness is itself a symptom of a greater problem or a problem in its own right, as when the collective speaker writes near the end: “Basically, / I’m in my room all day and I can’t get a job, so I can’t/Get out of my rut,” (77). The line break’s emphasis on “can’t” here is key, but the meaning of the sentence is ambiguous. Can the collective speaker not get a job because she is in her room all day or is she in her room all day because she cannot get a job? Perhaps the connective “and” here indicates that both are the case and therefore mutually reinforcing. Where Al knows why he’s lonely and depressed, the collective speaker at the end does not. Perhaps that is why Al has a name and the collective speaker does not. To put it in Kristevan terms, Al has entered the Symbolic where names, concatenation and explanation are possible.

Of course, we should be wary of treating the collective speaker of the poem as a single person. The moi qui grogne of the poem, like the sources from which it draws, most assuredly does not suffer from asymbolia. That collective speaker is voluble and very much lodged in the realm of the Symbolic. In fact, one of the problems that No, Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself demonstrates is that these folks are all-too firmly wedged there. They can only figure their emotions in unhelpful, pre-fabricated terms.
They find themselves tormented by mass-mediated images of a happiness they have not achieved (as we saw with those peculiar Christmas barbecues) and tend to describe their experience in equally mass-mediated terms that provide little insight into their problems. One example: consciously or unconsciously, the lines “I can’t describe what’s going on with me…there’s this hunger so deep inside me/that I don’t know how to feel” (23, ellipsis in the original) seem rely on the song “Lies” by the Goth metal band, Evanescence.

More interesting, all these expressions of loneliness take place in public. They were quite literally mediated by the Web and they are now published in handy book form as a poem. One could imagine a way in which chat rooms and sites like Web of Loneliness could be therapeutic, could serve as a relief for the isolation that besets the collective speaker of the book. After all, that is the promise that Senior’s article “Alone Together” proposes at its end. As I mentioned before, Fitterman does not include this section in his poem:

[W]hat the Internet and New York have in common is that each environment facilitates interaction between individuals like no other, and both would be positively useless—would literally lose their raison d’être—if solitary individuals didn’t furiously interact in each. They show us, in trillions of invisible ways every day, that people are essentially nothing without one another. We may sometimes want to throttle our fellow travelers on the F train. We may on occasion curse our neighbors for playing music so loud it splits the floor. But living cheek-by-jowl is the necessary price we pay for our well-being. And anyway, who wants to ride the subway alone?

The collective speaker of No, Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself does not seem to experience any of this at all. That speaker does not feel that she is interacting with anyone. In fact, you could say that the misery (and the vacuity) of the “I” in the poem comes from the poem’s sense that it is really nothing more than a soliloquy, a confession without a confessor or an audience. There is no “you” out there in the first place:

And here’s another really sad factor: I’m totally imagining who this “you” might be; I guess one could say it’s a fantasy because I’m not really talking to anyone, I’m not really relating to anyone, and it’s not Like I’m going out and meeting anyone, so when I’m saying “you”, I really don’t know who I am addressing… And isn’t that even doubly sad and pathetic? Of course, “you” don’t
have to answer that because there really isn’t a “you”
And I don’t even know who that “you” would be if there were one.
This just adds another level to my pain and desolation. (69)

Not surprisingly, a poem that seems bereft of objects (or objects beyond a depleted self) is equally bereft of other subjects. Against the therapeutic model of poetry as a counter-depressant, as a way of overcoming the most devastating effects of melancholy (of keeping sadness on “this side of depression”), Fitterman’s poem is abject and adamantly non-therapeutic. There is no change, no development, no uplift here, just that all-encompassing concluding line from Inquisition’s lyric: “Total sadness, total darkness, total coldness, total pain” (78).

To get the full effect of Fitterman’s rejection of the therapeutic, it is worth looking at Schuyler’s 40-odd-page “The Morning of the Poem,” against which Fitterman’s poem defines itself. In many ways, Schuyler’s title contains an aural pun because it could just as easily have been titled “The Mourning of the Poem.” Towards its end, Schuyler writes

Before dawn I woke and made my oatmeal, orange juice and
Coffee and thought about how this poem seems mostly about what I’ve
lost: the one who mattered most, my best friend, Paul
(Who mattered least) the Island, the California wildflower paper,
the this, the that, Whippoorwill, buried friends,
And the things I only write between the lines.25

And indeed, although the poem is in effect a diary of a month or so that he spent at his mother’s house in East Aurora, New York, in the summer of 1976, it is in fact a poem very much possessed by death and loss. The most important of these is the death of Fairfield Porter, his friend and sometime lover, “the one who mattered most,” who had passed away the previous September. At one point in the poem, Schuyler addresses Porter directly:

…were
You buried in your sneakers? Of course not,
though in a tender joke you were;
A nosegay tossed on the coffin: but this is not
your poem, your poem I may
Never write, too much, though it is there and
Needs only to be written down
And one day will and if it isn’t, it doesn’t matter. (262)
Strictly speaking, “The Morning of the Poem” is not Porter’s elegy. It is dedicated to the painter Darragh Park and keeps returning to him. It is Park’s head that Schuyler associates with Baudelaire’s skull in the first lines and it is Park’s studio in Chelsea that Schuyler imagines returning to at the end. Even so, the ease with which Schuyler hails different people in the second person (Park, Porter, a lover named Bob and the English artist Ann Dunn, amongst others) becomes something of a joke: “When you read this poem you will have to decide/Which of the ‘yous’ are ‘you,’” (294). And if we take Fitterman seriously, we have to see that this is precisely the reason why Fitterman includes the complaint about the absence of a real “you” in No, Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself. Schuyler has real “yous” to write of and to. Fitterman’s collective speaker does not.

In other words, Schuyler is able to write about his losses precisely because he has other subjects, other others to address. What is more, he has any number of objects as well. “The Morning of the Poem” describes Schuyler in what is his customary situation: sitting by a window and writing about what he sees. He is very precise:

An August morning, cool and cloudless,
Maple leaves lightly moving, conifers perfectly still, robins
skimming the grass where a fat black dog named
Cornelia just took a dump, a sky not blue but white, up the valley
from Olean a freight train passes (the distant
Sound of breakers)… (293)

Even the dogs in “The Morning of the Poem” have names. It is an important aspect of Schuyler’s poetic that he gives due, sometimes meticulous, attention to the smallest of objects (the parts of a flower, perhaps, or Cornelia’s turds) and the gradations of color [an “almost autumn sky” like “a swimming pool awash/with cinnamon and gentian” (264)]. Schuyler was an aesthete of the incidental and his aestheticism is all about his fine discriminations of judgment, his attention to the subtle gradations in things. His work is all about differentiation much in the way that Fitterman’s book is not. Where Fitterman’s poem lacks other subjects and objects, “The Morning of the Poem” is awash with them. Schuyler’s poetry would never find its way into Against Expression. It is resolutely diegetical. It points to this and to that. It is heavily referential.

If “The Morning of the Poem” is therapeutic in Kristeva’s sense, it is because Schuyler has in fact written Porter’s elegy. The dead painter’s
empty space has been filled by a living artist. The pronominal shifter “you” has in turn been shifted to other referents (Park, Dunn, Bob, the reader). But, if we are true to the implications of Kristeva’s word—and I am following Darian Leader here, who argues that all acts of mourning are in fact re-enactments of unspoken, primordial grief—Porter stands in for a more elemental loss. The poem thus displaces that loss and it narrativizes that loss, albeit provisionally. It watches time pass and learns to distinguish between days. It can make a story of its past and imagine a future (“Look over/Your shoulder into the future: one thing I want to see is heavy/snow falling in Chelsea” (296)). It is not “a monotonous melody,” not a “recurring, obsessive” litany.

If I say that “The Morning of the Poem” is therapeutic, I mean this in a rather strict sense. I do not want to suggest that the poem tries to offer moral counsel or is somehow “good for you.” Unlike Mary Oliver’s famous and insidious “The Summer Day,” which addresses an anonymous reader that it knows is out there, “The Morning of the Poem” does not demand that you take stock and change your ways. “The Summer Day,” with all its spilled religion, makes precisely that demand and for that reason it has been the stuff of sermons and college entrance essays since it was first published: “Doesn’t everything die at last, and too soon? Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?” Schuyler’s pointed rejection of religion is not only a rejection of the notion of sin (a notion that hovers about No, Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself); it also refuses uplift.

At one point Schuyler imagines Walt Whitman and Heinrich Heine visiting him at his deathbed and wishing him goodbye, not hello. They are not ushering him into a poetic Elysium. Far from it: they are of this world, not the next. Nor does Schuyler seek comfort in nature. Unlike many poems that describe trees, plants and flowers, “The Morning of the Poem” neither identifies with nature writ large, nor does it see natural processes as hostile, alien forces. It is thus neither Wordsworth nor Jeffers. In fact, this is probably not a nature poem at all. If anything, Schuyler’s celebration of the pleasures of otium and his mastery of the middle style, show him to be thoroughly Horatian. The poem is a letter and could, in its own way, stand next to Horace’s Epistolae. In fact, Schuyler might well be the closest heir to eighteenth-century English Horatianism that the American twentieth century could produce.  

So, in spite of the number of losses, miseries and mishaps that “The Morning of the Poem” alludes to, Schuyler’s work presents a sweetly
compelling, if somewhat archaic, image of the good life: the poet, living in contemplative retreat, content to look and to freely espouse. As if to make Schuyler’s weak materialism (or rather, his strong latter-day Epicureanism) clear, “The Morning of the Poem,” ends as it begins, with a man taking a leak, and there is nothing particularly uplifting about urination. But Schuyler is after all a poet of small physical pleasures. Significantly, he does not take sex as his index for pleasure, but rather eating (“grapes, oysters/And champagne: bliss is such a simple thing” (296)) and sight (what he calls in another poem “the pure pleasure of/Simply looking”, (220)). If “The Morning of the Poem” fulfills Bedient’s demand that it offer joy, light and help for pain, it does so by modeling a path out of sadness, loneliness and grief through a conscious investment in the world.36

No, Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself does not model any successful working-through of loss. Quite the opposite, it offers a portrait of unaccountable abjection at every point. To what end? Bedient would like to argue that Fitterman’s poem plasters “procedures over melancholy.” But it does not. It unmasks melancholy and shows it in all its everyday dreariness. No, Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself is up to something else. Rather than deny affect, it offers it up to view. It does not work through unpleasant affect therapeutically, but presents it as a problem. In its way, then, the poem displays another stage in the modernist critique of semblance.

Another stage: I mean that the poem takes Schuyler’s own critique of semblance one step further. For all its conversational ease, “The Morning of the Poem,” launches its own assault on Schein, because it makes the process of its own creation very visible. Schuyler tells us several times that he is sitting at his typewriter in either underwear or shorts, looking out his window and writing; that he spends several hours there every morning; that the keys get sticky when he has been drinking lemonade. The poem does not attempt to pass itself off as a gapless whole. It does not present itself in reified form as a natural object, but as the product of a single man’s activity. In a certain way, the aesthetically arbitrary ending of “The Morning of the Poem” reinforces this point: “But Pernod, Pernod is murder. I wish I had some now, but tea/and orange juice will have to do:/Tomorrow: New York: in blue, in green, in white, East Aurora goodbye,” (303). The poem does not round itself off but comes to an abrupt halt because, after all, Schuyler is about to leave. It’s not that there is no more to say or that the poem’s themes have been resolved. Neither is the case. Schuyler is due to
return to Chelsea. The poem, a letter to a friend, need go no further because he is going to see the friend tomorrow.

Nevertheless, Schuyler’s “The Morning of the Poem” preserves the illusion of its immediacy. It presents itself as the direct transcription of the vagaries of both perception and thought as they happen. It maps a single mind at work. What is more, it never shows us the depth of grief. It displays grief overcome. While we can attempt to retrace its methods of displacement and concatenation back to their melancholic source, we can only assume that source. In other words, we have to begin from the presumption that the poem is about grief—a fairly easy presumption, given its insistence on loss—in order to see it successfully working through that grief. We do not hear melancholy’s “exhausted, interrupted” litany. We just catch the melody once the interruptions have ceased. So, if the poem is not a gapless whole, it would seem that the consciousness that produces it is. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say the poem provides the illusion of consciousness in its totality. It might not be transparent to itself, but it remains open to all its meanderings and is large enough to contain multitudes. The idea that the poem can be therapeutic and model its victory over crushing grief is the very illusion that the poem promotes, and the flexibility of its lineation bodies forth the emotional flexibility that it describes. The poem is about the pleasures of consciousness.

Fitterman will have none of this. By suturing together an untold number of voices and statements, he has created an almost impossible poetic “I,” one that is frequently and fiercely contradictory in its statements, vocabularies and frames of reference. It is only bound together by its moods and its brittle antagonisms and the insistence of the first-person pronoun. The lines swell, not as a sign of a capacious self, but merely to show just how much borrowed language there is out there. It also demonstrates that the melancholy the poem describes is almost infinitely expandable.

While Fitterman is thus displaying a healthy allergic reaction Schuyler’s own negotiation with semblance, he is also engaging semblance—as he must—in his curation of his source texts, in his selection and his lineation of the stuff he has found on the Web. In other words, that curation must count as semblance. To the extent that for Adorno “illusion” is not optional, it is the subjectively mediated form that the material demands. Form, as the shaping presence of the subjective, cannot, as Adorno says, merely be subtracted any more than the objective can. Adorno likens it to water dowsing: “[Art’s] immanent process has the quality of following a divining rod. To follow where the hand is drawn…” 37 But the illusion is
precisely that, an illusion. To put it in Adorno’s terms, it is an unavoidable untruth that allows the truth of the material, if only momentarily. Another word for that truth is “expression.”

We should remember that Adorno takes his examples from music and he is thinking of the marking expressivo on a score. In this sense, “expression” is not the expression of a particular thought. As Adorno says of Gustav Mahler: “This is not the expression of something specific...It aims at marked intensity.”38 This intensity breaks the necessary illusions of form much as a dissonance might escape the impositions of harmony. It is the moment where the material reveals the fragility and untenability of the gapless whole: “Dissonance is effectively expression; the consonant and harmonious want to soften and eliminate it.”39 Expression expresses a barely differentiated state or a mood: “sadness, energy, or longing.”40 But given that Adorno thinks that the world as it stands is wrong, expression expresses life in that world as pain. It is “the suffering countenance of artworks” just as the “expression of living creatures is that of pain.”41

Adorno famously remarked that writing poetry after Auschwitz was barbaric. He no less famously recanted this summary judgment when he wrote in Negative Dialectics that “[p]erennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured person has to howl; hence it may have been wrong to say that after Auschwitz poetry could no longer be written.”42 Poetry, as art, as semblance that makes expression appear, makes audible the voice of suffering nature.

Now, there is more than a touch of the gothic in all this, and if we take Adorno seriously, we have to admit that his dig that psychoanalysis is only true in its exaggerations applies equally to Critical Theory. Even so, his interest in suffering nature—that is to say, his interest in what has been dominated in us—should interest us as it interests both the poets I discuss in this chapter.

We can hear that suffering in “The Morning of the Poem,” because it is a work in which fulfillment lodges either in memory or in prospect. There is an asceticism that runs through it, for all Schuyler’s discussion of pleasure—an asceticism born of the peculiarities of Schuyler’s situations. The poet presents himself as an alcoholic who can no longer drink and as an aging gay man who can no longer find partners. He suffers from debilitating mental illness. He therefore does not have money because he does not have a job. The hard-won wistfulness of “The Morning of the Poem” shows that what I describe as its Horatianism is bought at a considerable cost that cannot—or can no longer—be paid in full. Otium, the dolce far niente of
Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s solitary walker and botanist, seems to be the privilege of the rich—though I’m not sure that even the rich can enjoy it anymore—and the mad. Similarly, you could argue that the self-conscious artifice that generates *Eunoia* undercuts its profusion of depicted delights by showing them to be pure magic. They are the products of a sleight of hand that we would like to be true.

Fitterman’s poem has none of Schuyler’s wistfulness or *Eunoia*’s fantasies of opulence. It has a hard time imagining any specific objects of desire and its wistfulness has hardened into pain. What is more, the longings that the poem does manage to articulate reveal them to be the products of clichéd, mass-mediated fantasies (“I imagine big family/Get-togethers, sleepovers at their houses, and gatherings for/Christmas Eve dinner, maybe even watch a Christmas/Movie together, maybe look at some old photos and open presents” (43)). Where Schuyler can figure fulfillment as something that has happened once or might happen again—he can project it or remember it—the collective speaker of *No, Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself* cannot imagine it as anything but a remote impossibility, an imaginable but unapproachable horizon. This is the underside of the rhetoric of creative disruption/destruction that has been the smiley-face ideology of the Great Recession: not constant innovation, but the repetition of the ever-the-same; not boundless creativity, but “another vicious cycle/That I need to get the hell out of” (74).

Bedient is right to say that poems like *No, Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself* do not express the author’s affect, but he is wrong to assume that they avoid affect. Some do, of course, but then again, that is true of more traditionally “creative” writing as well. Fitterman’s poem thematizes affect, makes emotion and its articulation a topic for discussion. Because it is not therapeutic, *No, Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself* offers loneliness and dysthymia as problems that are not merely psychological in origin and therefore not merely psychological in solution. The poem hints at sociological and economic explanations for depression, and the collective nature of its “I” indicates that it is not merely a personal problem that an individual has to “get over” in seven, nine or 12 steps. The poem’s lack of resolution and its tedious repetitions are indications that something is indeed wrong, not just with the poem (it is boring and offers no answers) or with the collective speaker (she is boring and cliché-mad) but also with the world that produces them both.
I will confess that I do not like Fitterman’s poem. Even so, to like it, as one might “like” something on Facebook, is beside the point. This is not a poem that one can like: it is grating. Its unpleasantness, an aesthetic quality, is expressive, in the Adornian sense. Expression is “the suffering countenance” of the poem (as in Note 6). It registers protest. Adorno wrote:

Music admits that the fate of the world no longer depends on the individual, but it also knows that this individual is capable of no content except his own, however fragmented and impotent. Hence his fractures are the script of truth. In them, the social movement appears negatively, as in its victims.43

The same could be said of No, Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself. Adorno does not mean in this last quotation that the individual is the origin of its content any more than he would say that it is the origin of its experience. The individual, fragmented and impotent, is where experience takes place, where the content happens. In turn, like other Uncreative works, No, Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself registers these social and historical fractures with its interpenetration of semblance and material, of the subjective and the objective. It manifests—however negatively—the hope—improbable as it may seem—that things might possibly change for the better.44

Notes

3. Marjorie Perloff, “The Oulipo Factor,” 34. Craig Dworkin makes the same point when he writes that Eunoia “could not have been written by a computer program: the subsequent rules and constraints…ensure that even if the vocabulary were automatically generated, digital automation alone could never complete the requirements for the text built from that lexic-on.” Craig Dworkin, “The Imaginary Solution,” Contemporary Literature LXVII:1 (2007) 52.
7. “The illusion is created that there is no illusion; that the diffuse and ego-alien harmonize with the posited totality, whereas the harmony itself is organized; that the process is presented from below to above, even though the traditional determination from above to below, without which the spiritual determination of the artwork cannot be conceived, persists,” *Aesthetic Theory*, 107.


11. “The enlightenment resulted in the subordination to that nature from which enlightenment was to free humanity because, out of the terror of primitive scarcity, history became a process of self-assertion through self-renunciation. Knowledge thus separates from its material and loses its telos.” Robert Hullot-Kentor, “Popular Music and ‘The Aging of the New Music,’” *Things Beyond Resemblance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006) 176–177.

12. “The capriciousness of this legalism, however the mere semblance of objectivity in the system that is simply been decreed, becomes apparent in the inappropriateness of its rules the structural interrelations of the music as it develops, relations the rules cannot do away with the merely thought up is always also too little thought out.” Theodor W. Adorno, “The Aging of the New Music,” *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) 187.


24. “Another inspiration or problem for me was working in verse form—what I would call a revisit of poetic form, because a lot of what I write doesn’t look like poetry. No, Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself looks like poetry. Poetry is a kind of field of feeling and affect, and I wanted to call up that mechanism...Josef Kaplan told me he was really getting a lot out of Schuyler’s The Morning of the Poem which I went back to and immediately got excited about the form he uses.” Robert Fitterman, “A Robert Fitterman Interview,” accessed March 12, 2014, http://uglyducklingpresse.tumblr.com/post/76430310086/a-robert-fitterman-interview.

25. Robert Fitterman, No, Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself (New York: Ugly Duckling Presse, 2014) 42–43. All further references will be included parenthetically in the text.


27. The Thing is “the real that does not lend itself to signification, the center of attraction and repulsion” whose existence therefore can be felt but not named,” Kristeva, Black Sun 12.

28. Kristeva, Black Sun 23–24, 40–47.


33. James Schuyler, Collected Poems (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993) 296. All further references to Schuyler’s poetry will be included parenthetically within the text.


36. I would thus argue that his diegetical emphasis does not represent an outmoded understanding of language’s referentiality, but rather, given the severity of his mental illness, marks a real psychological achievement, a kind of heroism.


44. I am here referring to Adorno’s claim in “On Lyric Poetry and Society,” that “[i]n its protest the poem expresses the dream of a world in which things would be different.” Much more needs to be said about the nature of that “dream.” In the last aphorism of *Mimima Moralia*, Adorno writes that thought requires the notion of redemption if it is not to fall into despair and that, given this need, the question of redemption’s reality is “almost indifferent.” As Gerhard Richter has pointed out in a close and characteristically astute reading of this passage, Adorno is not saying that the reality of redemption “hardly matters,” as the standard English translation puts it. It matters a great deal. But we should pay close attention to the fact that Adorno does not talk about the possibility or impossibility of redemption here—rather, he is talking about its actualization. The fact that it is possible, though highly even desperately improbable, is the key to its importance. See Theodor W. Adorno, “On Lyric Poetry and Society,” *Notes to Literature*, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 2 vols, 1:40; Gerhard Richter, “Aesthetic Theory and Non-Propositional Truth Content,” *Language Without Soil*, ed. Gerhard Richter (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010) 131–146 and my own, “In Light of ‘The Light of Transcendence’: Redemption in Adorno,” *Messianism, Apocalypse and Redemption in 20th Century German Thought*, ed. Wayne Cristaudo and Wendy Baker (Adelaide: Australasian Theological Forum Press, 2006) 220–230.