he has uncovered Ellen Eyre's identity. Eyre was, in fact, William Kinney, a female impersonator and a con man who lured men to his rooms, performed sexual favors, and then blackmailed them. There is nothing to suggest that Whitman was blackmailed, but the knowledge that "Ellen Eyre" was a cross-dressing man suggests alternative readings of the often-quoted letter. Did Whitman actually take Eyre for a "female privateer"? Or did he realize that her "false colors" included her gender? As Genoways shrewdly puts it, "Was Whitman's interest . . . in the young woman 'Ellen Eyre' or the young man who arrived at Pfaff's under the shadowy light of the cellar's torches in the garb of a woman?"

As the Ellen Eyre story indicates, Genoways's title is a bit of a red herring; his real subject is not Whitman and the Civil War but the full range of the poet's life from 1860 to 1862. Some months after his encounter with Ellen Eyre, Whitman found his brother George's name in a newspaper listing of Union soldiers wounded at the Battle of Fredericksburg; within hours he was on a train headed south. With his arrival in northern Virginia, the familiar story of Walt Whitman and the Civil War—recounted by Morris, Epstein, Roper, and many other biographers—begins.

As Genoways notes in his introduction, the early Civil War period is only one of the gaps in Whitman biography. The most famous is 1850 to 1855, when Whitman transformed himself from a conventional journalist, poet, and story writer into a revolutionary poet, turning Walter Whitman of Brooklyn into the half-mythic colossus Walt. Genoways has performed a valuable service in filling out the story of the years from 1860 to 1862. If his book inspires someone to undertake a similar effort to cover the years preceding the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, it will have accomplished multitudes.

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GÜNTER LEYPOLDT. *Cultural Authority in the Age of Whitman: A Transatlantic Perspective*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009. viii + 302 pp.

Whitman's representative status as democracy's poet owes much to F. O. Matthiessen's *American Renaissance* and its grounding of cultural nationalism in literary form. Günter Leypoldt introduces his absorptive study, *Cultural Authority in the Age of Whitman: A Transatlantic Perspective*, with this critical commonplace of "the democratic-style theory of Leaves of Grass" (1). Though Leypoldt's title partially echoes Matthiessen's ("Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman"), his rigorous transatlantic reading of the cultural authority of Whitman opens onto a field of vision that reaches beyond Matthiessen's influential "American-Renaissance construction" of Whitman. For Leypoldt, the "cultural authority" of what he terms the "Whitmanian moment" doesn't begin with Matthiessen in 1941, nor Burroughs in the later nineteenth century, nor even with Whitman himself in 1855. The authority of the "Whitmanian," rather, is more complicated than such singular locations would presume. Building squarely upon Pierre Bourdieu's theory of literary

fields, Leypoldt argues that the modernist, "retrospective canonization" of Whitman and American literary nationalism projects backwards and forwards, transnationally and transhistorically, within a complex emergence of literary professionalism between 1750 and 1900 (3). Various and longstanding complications and conflicts between notions of cultural politics and literary style, Leypoldt asserts, are "smoothed over" in the modernist privileging of Whitman's experimental form and "rendered more seamless than they would have appeared to his own generation of readers" (4). Is there something inherently democratic or even American in Whitman's poetic form—a link between political freedom and free verse—as Edward Dowden, or later Matthiessen and William Carlos Williams, assume?

Viewed through the lens of Leypoldt's cultural "field," the answer is, resolutely, no. In surveying, in quite stunning detail, the complexities of this emergent, rather than singular, notion of a "democratic style" embodied in the "Whitmanian," Leypoldt offers an analogy by way of music. As Leypoldt shows, music is among several "cultural parallelisms" of great relevance both to Whitman's poetics and to the discourse of literary professionalism that informs it. "The felt aesthetic power of *Leaves of Grass* is incontestable and defies hasty judgment," Leypoldt argues: "But Whitman's manifesto-level claims arguably tell us less about his aesthetic world than about the cultural contexts that make his claims persuasive. The meaning of Whitman's 'song' remains blank without a specific musical 'program,' a theory or narrative about literature and culture that shapes our perception of the politics and cultural location of Whitman's formal movements. The conceptual contingencies of the program rather than ontology determines whether we recognize in the *Leaves*, say, the undulations of the Atlantic ocean (Matthiessen 1941), the de-hierarchizing turmoil of radical democracy (Dowden 1871), the picturesque roughness of the American landscape (Burroughs 1896) . . . or, well, 'hexameters . . . trying to bubble through sewage' (Wendell 1900: 473)" (122-123). For Leypoldt, Whitman's concept of "lawless music" performs the cultural work of the program by offering "a poetic music sophisticated enough to 'tally' with America." It is the "formal virtuosity" of the poetry, Leypoldt emphasizes, the music and not the singing, that allows the Whitmanian to be at once stylistically radical and culturally representative, aesthetically detached yet also democratic (102).

In the figure-ground relationship between Whitman as author and "Whitmanian" as cultural authority, between singer and music, Leypoldt thoroughly shifts the focus toward the ground and away from the figure. Contingent upon the contexts of a literary and intellectual field emerging throughout the nineteenth century, Whitman's cultural authority is, in other words, a "discursive space" (237). Leypoldt's study thoroughly maps that discursive space through four sections, each rich enough to be the subject of its own book. In the first, he explores the transatlantic contexts of the literary field in which Whitman, and more to his point, the "Whitmanian," emerges in the nineteenth century (chapter 1) and within the U.S. discourse of literary nationalism (chapter 2). In the first chapter alone, Leypoldt includes in his transatlantic and trans-historical sights readings and discussion of the following: Ruskin, Wordsworth, Herder, Schlegel, Coleridge, Carlyle, Melville,

Kant. Leypoldt's bibliography confirms the incredible range of his reading of the cultural context upon which he builds each chapter; a listing of primary texts, separate from secondary texts, is thirteen pages long and contains, from Adorno to Zimmermann, some one hundred different authors.

The second section takes up two representative authors from this literary field in the U.S., Emerson and Whitman. In doing so, Leypoldt seeks to complicate the smoothed-over view that Whitman's democratic poetics is singularly influenced, or brought to a boil, by Emerson's transcendental conception of the poet. The extensive transatlantic reading that Leypoldt continues here, particularly by way of Emerson's *English Traits* (Carlyle, of course, but also Hallam, Hegel, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Cousin, Ruskin) troubles the more traditional model of linear influence and leads him to this conclusion: "Emerson's relationship to Whitmanian authority is more ambiguous" since, from Leypoldt's transatlantic perspective, Emerson's status as a public intellectual who is interested in the social vernacular is questionable (83). Read in the context of this larger literary field, Emerson seems closer to Wordsworth than to Whitman. In the third section of the study, Leypoldt explores the "conceptual contingencies" of three "cultural parallels" in the nineteenth-century literary field of importance to Whitman's poetics and its critical reception: music, "poetic naturism" (187), democratic poetics. The final section of the book takes up the invention of Whitmanian authority in two periods: in the late nineteenth century by Whitman's contemporaries, where Whitman's early status as representative American poet is less secure than many presume (Wendell locates Whitman's style not in American democracy but by way of Europe); and in the early twentieth century by the modernist literary avant-garde, including the scholar (Matthiessen) who gives Whitman's moment its enduring name.

In a brief epilogue that considers the continuation of the "American-Renaissance construction" of Whitman by postmodernists in the late twentieth century, Leypoldt smartly summarizes the stake of his project. Wouldn't it be wiser, he asks, to understand the "socio-political discourse" critics still want to read in Whitman not in its "stylistic embodiments" but in his very discourse of the social and political? In contextualizing the ways that a discourse of literary professionalism was absorbed into Whitman's style and literary form, Leypoldt seeks to raise, not to bury, the political and social in Whitman and other writers from the field. As he puts it in his final sentence, "we have to be prepared to engage with Whitman's political or ethical vocabularies, rather than practice a concealed formalism that diagnoses Whitmanian 'song' as the most refined location of his politics or ethics" (259). Leypoldt's study, ranging thoughtfully over the field of transatlantic intellectual culture of the nineteenth century, provides the groundwork for other critics to engage with Whitman's political or ethical vocabularies. Readers looking for Leypoldt himself to offer in this book a reading of the political and cultural *in* Whitman, and not just *of* Whitman, will be disappointed. Despite always keeping someone or something named "Whitman" in view, his clear focus throughout is on the larger field and not the figure.

One distinct limitation of this approach to the field-eye view of Whitman's literary achievement arises in moments when the stage seems expertly set for the critic to continue his reading *into* Whitman, and not just around him. In his chapter on "The Democratic Muse," Leypoldt explores the cultural contexts of the literary nationalism that informs the notion of a democratic Whitmanian style, in particular the "discourse of curative variety" that connects cultural health with freedom and variety (233). Ranging from Shaftesbury to Hume to Mill to Tocqueville to Bancroft to Chesnutt, Leypoldt only turns to Whitman in the final paragraph, noting that *Democratic Vistas* begins with a direct reference to Mill's *On Liberty*. Isn't this precisely the place to engage further with Whitman's own political vocabulary in this very text? Leypoldt wants to focus, I understand, primarily on the context and not the form. However, in this example, not just Whitman, but also more recent Whitman criticism, disappear from view; Leypoldt doesn't address how other critics long after Matthiessen (George Kateb and Betsy Erkkila come to mind; neither is cited) have engaged with Whitman's political vocabulary. In a similar vein, in his rereading of Whitman's Emersonian tutelage, Jay Grossman's *Reconstituting the American Renaissance* remains noticeably absent. It seems strange, moreover, that a study that interrogates critical notions of Whitman's democratic style makes no reference to C. Carroll Hollis's *Language and Style in Leaves of Grass*.

Leypoldt's study effectively reveals the "concealed formalism" that inhabits and complicates any invocation of Whitmanian democratic poetics, from the 1870s to this day. It may be that Leypoldt is so intent on not practicing that formalism himself that he turns, in moments, too far away from Whitman's texts. While reading thoughtfully, and never reductively, the texts of so many others in the field, he potentially reduces Whitman to everything but text. For both reasons, to reckon with the challenge of this revisionary transatlantic perspective and to improve upon some of its blind-spots, *Cultural Authority in the Age of Whitman* is worth the attention of all scholars of nineteenth-century literary culture, Whitmanian and otherwise.

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