

disciplined strategy to create a new poetic voice in line with Emerson's call in "The Poet" for a distinctively American bard. They insist that Whitman was both "sage and huckster," that he "touched the gods with ink-smudged fingers" and "was concerned as much with the sales and reviews of his books as with the state of the human soul" (25).

Similarly, in their discussion of the controversial topic of Whitman's sexuality, they point out that nothing in his poems prohibits one from concluding that Whitman endorsed genital sexuality between men, "but neither do they require that conclusion" (65). Mystery is an essential component of Whitman's love poetry, and that holds true for "Children of Adam" as well as "Calamus": "A Woman Waits for Me" is as much about the intimacy of poet and reader as about sexual union.

*Re-Scripting Walt Whitman* leaves out much that some readers might consider essential: psychoanalytically informed consideration of the ways in which Whitman's career and work can be seen as attempts to deal with the legacy of his spectacularly dysfunctional family, analysis of such major poems as "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" or "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," or extended discussion of his work's grounding in nineteenth-century U.S. culture—this last a subject treated at length by both Folsom and Price in previous books. But in order to bring in their book at under 150 pages, the authors necessarily leave much unsaid—a tactic appropriate in treating a poet who believed that the strongest and sweetest songs yet remain to be sung. The strategic omissions allow Folsom and Price to emphasize at length Whitman's script(s), his handwritten drafts and successive revisions of *Leaves of Grass*. The result is a book valuable for whoever, novice or expert, undertakes to hold Walt Whitman in hand.

*The College of New Jersey*

MICHAEL ROBERTSON

EZRA GREENSPAN. *Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself": A Sourcebook and Critical Edition*. New York: Routledge, 2005. 210 pp.

Ezra Greenspan's *Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself": A Sourcebook and Critical Edition* will be eagerly annexed to the syllabi of many secondary and undergraduate English courses and will provide a generation of teachers with a standard pedagogical tool for their course work. This breakthrough sourcebook, in the notable *Routledge Guides to Literature* series, follows in the wake of the classic Edwin Haviland Miller volume, *Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself": A Mosaic of Interpretations* (1989), but Greenspan provides many innovative features that make his volume an essential supplement to Miller's. Miller's text is a photocopy of the 1855 edition of Whitman's epic, along with a most useful critical genealogy attached as a series of appendices; but Miller's condensed atlas of criticism tends to classify the poem according to the various strategies that have tried to contain the polymorphous work within certain critical models of coherence. Miller lays out some of the classical structuralist readings of Whitman's epic text, such as James E. Miller's, Roy Harvey Pearce's, and R.

W. B. Lewis's pioneering readings. Greenspan's belief in the interminability of the meanings of the text of "Song of Myself" free him from such constraints, as he suggests, since "dozens of schematic interpretations have been published in the twentieth century . . . , all assuming that a skein of narrative structure or thematic continuity can be read into or out of the poem. They vary widely and pursue remarkably divergent lines of thought." Thus, Greenspan's sourcebook is aligned with the now-standard dictum from Roland Barthes, in his essay "From Work to Text," that a text, as opposed to a work, is a "tissue, a woven fabric." Greenspan has given us the sourcebook for our poststructuralist moment, by delineating many of the threads of contextual and textual connections to Whitman's epic in a singularly hospitable yet rigorous manner.

In contrast to such inherited classic models of critical containment (so carefully traced in Miller's volume), Greenspan simply prints the 1881 edition of the text, along with an extensive critical apparatus that invites students to "challenge . . . conventional linear, narrative-centered practices of reading and writing." In the third section of the sourcebook, Greenspan invites the reader to approach the poem in the context of its textual history, its printing chronology, and its manuscript thicket; and he offers an illuminating note on the practice of reading the text of the poem itself. In addition to the 1881 edition, he usefully opens up the earlier editions of the text, by juxtaposing seven key passages from the 1855 edition, the ones that were revised most provocatively, along with a lapidary but resonant prefatory note to each earlier excerpt. These key passages include "I celebrate myself," "A child said," and "I am the hounded slave." For example, in Section 11, the "twenty-ninth bather" sequence, Greenspan alerts students to the dominant notion that "[m]ost of the eroticism in Whitman is male-centered, as in his now famous 'Calamus' poems first published in the 1860 edition, and certainly Whitman is today widely regarded as the premier gay poet of his culture. What is distinctive about this passage, however, is the fact that the eroticism is lodged primarily in a woman—if anything, an even more powerful transgression against poetic and social propriety." In this one statement, Greenspan condenses sexual identity politics, gendering the self, and the constraints of publishing. Typically, then, these textual notes cue the reader to textual changes, cultural politics, social differences, and aesthetic matters at the same time, in ways that instructors will find open out into the other two major sections of Greenspan's sourcebook, "Contexts" and "Interpretations."

For cultural critics, the "Contexts" section will offer pathways into the tangled but enmeshed ways that "Song of Myself" converses with the material culture and identities outside the epic poem itself. The "Contextual Overview" contains short essays by Greenspan which survey the "Political and Social Context" of Whitman's life and work, the "Cultural Context," as well as a unique section called "A Life in Print, with Portraits." One of the many admirable teacherly tools in this sourcebook is the diction Greenspan uses: he manages to condense complex issues like manifest destiny and slavery in prose that is transparent, along with clear footnotes and definitions, but he also opens up a resonant space for an individual teacher to expand the consider-

ation of such tools with supplementary documents, lectures, and other source materials. For example, students can locate themselves vis-a-vis the printing houses in lower Manhattan, as well as define the New York Crystal Palace, all in the space of a few concise paragraphs that invite further inquiry. The "Chronology" of Whitman's life and work, so frequently focused on biography and letters, here accents the print culture with precise denotations of publishing outlets, publishers, and resonant comments on the printing industry that only a scholar of Greenspan's stature could produce. His erudition as a print historian lends these pages an authority not usually found in such pedagogical texts. For instance, the first "Contexts" section concludes with photocopies of several advertisements of *Leaves of Grass* that appeared in 1855, 1860, and 1881, interspersed with grey-box contextual notes that situate the publishers' profile in the print neighborhood of their contemporaries.

The second section, "Interpretations," will find its way onto many syllabi, since Greenspan has not only carefully selected both standard nineteenth- and twentieth-century critical responses to "Song," but also has prefaced them with his own approachable but erudite commentary. For example, in the "Nineteenth-Century Responses and Criticism" section, Greenspan notes in the preface to the infamous Rufus Griswold 1855 review of *Leaves*, "Griswold's assault was not to be easily dismissed. It fairly expressed the hostility of social, religious, and cultural conservatives to Whitman's assault on their cathedral of taste and portended the depth and breadth of antagonism that *Leaves of Grass* would incite for the remainder of the century" (55). Even while nicely condensing this ideological divide, Greenspan latches onto key terms that students will readily recognize and opens the door to supplemental pedagogical work. Or, in characterizing the leitmotif of nineteenth-century reviewers' rhetoric, Greenspan states: "The review nicely exemplifies several practices common in nineteenth-century reviews. One is the heavy reliance on excerpts, a norm in the era's often subjective style of formal reviewing and freer circulation of both copyrighted and uncopyrighted texts than in our time. Another is an editorial license unacceptable by twentieth-century standards, evidenced here by [Charles A.] Dana's heavy-handed policy of inserting his own titles to the verse excerpts from *Leaves*." Thus, in a deft stroke, Greenspan has evoked copyright politics in an age of downloading, which invites discussion of the circulation of texts in social and cultural spaces, as well as the refashioning of authorial material in an age of hypertext.

In the "Twentieth-Century Responses and Criticism" section, Greenspan has assembled the most eclectic group of readings that I have seen in any critical companion to Whitman's work. The breadth of the critics' span includes classic textual echoes like Ezra Pound's "A Pact" (1915), as well as an excerpt of feminist autobiography like Alicia Ostriker's "Loving Walt Whitman and the Problem of America" (1992), and an excerpt from Karen Sanchez-Eppler's cultural materialist *Touching Liberty: Abolition, Feminism, and the Politics of the Body* (1993). The most tantalizing inclusion is Michael Gold's "Ode to Walt Whitman" (1935), a mock heroic poem from the socialist agitator that demonstrates just how proletarian Whitman's verse can become: "Sing sing O new pioneers with Father Walt / Of a strong and beautiful America / . . . Of sun, of moon, of Communism and joy in the wind / . . . It will come! It will

come! The strikes foretell it! / . . . Deep in the gangrened basements / Where Walt Whitman's America / Aches, to be born—." The allusions, textual echoes, and intertextual threads in Gold's ode align him with the generations of socialists and Marxists who have found in Whitman's epic poem a hymn of their own transformative horizon. In this pivotal edition and sourcebook, Greenspan has given us polyvocal platforms on which we can launch pedagogical inquiries with our students, and he provides an enriching textual canvas that opens rather than closes the doors of our competing (but always cognate) critical voices.

St. John's University

LUKE MANCUSO

FRED HERSCH ENSEMBLE. *Leaves of Grass*. New York: Palmetto Records, 2005. Compact Disc, 62 minutes.

When I wrote the entry, "Whitman's influence on Music," for *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia*, some twelve years ago now, I little expected that the next development in the ongoing fascination with Whitman's poetry would be a jazz treatment of the works. Yet now Fred Hersch, a leading jazz pianist and composer, has appeared with just that: a setting of "Song of Myself," as well as a number of other selections from Whitman's poems. The result places the poems in a new context, one that I believe Walt would have loved, and that helps us to appreciate the poems anew.

In an introductory essay in the liner notes, Hersch confesses that Whitman has been a lifelong inspiration, ever since he first read him in an American literature course at the New England Conservatory. He has now turned his love of the poet into a long piece of music, with the assistance of his own jazz ensemble, made up of Ralph Alessi, trumpet, flugelhorn; Mike Christianson, trombone; Bruce Williamson, clarinet, alto sax, bass clarinet; Tony Malaby, tenor sax; Erik Friedlander, cello; Drew Gress, bass; and John Hollenbeck, drums, percussion. Kate McGarry and Kurt Elling sing, at times speak, and occasionally chant the lines. The piece and the performance will be familiar to anyone who attended the 150th Anniversary conference last March in Lincoln, Nebraska, or the Sesquicentennial Symposium last September in Trenton, New Jersey, where Hersch and his group held forth.

Hersch has set a seemingly daunting task for himself: how to set Whitman, and especially "Song of Myself," into a jazz idiom that will remain true to the work and, at the same time, capture its essence in an hour. This is only a third of the duration of at least one other setting of the poem, by Robert Sanders, for "Narrator, Soprano, chorus, and a brass/percussion ensemble," first performed in 1970. To accomplish his purposes, Hersch has elected not to be all-inclusive; he has chosen instead to make judicious selections, tending to omit the more famous lines and, at the same time, constructing a seamless poem of his own. Thus he has reduced "Song of Myself" from its 1346 lines to less than one hundred.