

“THE BATTLE TRUMPET BLOWN!”:
WHITMAN’S PERSIAN IMITATIONS
IN *DRUM-TAPS*



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WHILE WALT WHITMAN’S THEMATIC USE of the Orient continues to receive critical attention based on his explicit foreign references,¹ his engagement with the poetry of Iran—aside from observations of specific signifiers in “A Persian Lesson”—has remained quite speculative and therefore analogical. J. R. LeMaster and Sabahat Jahan’s *Walt Whitman and the Persian Poets*, for example, compares Whitman’s mystical relation to his own religious influences and the Sufism of Rumi and Hafez.² Whitman left nothing comparable to Ralph Waldo Emerson’s scholarly notes of his eastern reading and his drafts of Persian translations through German sources; his very claims upon the foreign influence appear deliberately grounded in abstraction, as he both “denied *and* asserted that he had read the oriental mystics before writing the *Leaves of Grass*.”³ An examination of Whitman’s study of William Rounseville Alger’s *The Poetry of the East*⁴ and of Emerson’s essay “Persian Poetry” in the late 1850s and early 1860s, however, reveals a rather subtle yet sustained attempt to directly imitate Persian verse throughout much of his 1865 collection, *Drum-Taps*. This essay will analyze how and why Whitman came to mimic translations of Persian poetry and how he turned to identifiable foreign models to depict what he deemed his nation’s most significant historical moment. Such analysis suggests that Whitman is quite personally invested in Persian verse, using it to surrender the distinct Romantic individuality of his earlier poems for the greater spiritual preservation of his conflicted nation.

The specific Persian influence on *Drum-Taps* seems to have evaded identification because it tends to function in considerable ambiguity. Malini Johar Schueller astutely summarizes the American poet’s general use of the Orient by explaining, “Whitman’s Asia, far from simply being an abstraction, is constructed against and through particular historical and material realities that form a major part of the poems” (175). Yet unlike the examples Schueller considers, Whitman’s Civil War poems offer no eastern reference point upon which to project such important western history. Further impeding analysis,

along with the latent rhetorical effects of Persian translations, many of the actual “historical and material realities” of the war in Whitman’s rendering remain suspiciously absent. As Cristanne Miller explains:

In the 1865 *Drum-Taps*, Whitman eschews the discourse of enemies, describes no specific battles, no generals, no heroic deeds, alludes only in abstract terms to the war’s causes or goals, and never mentions who is fighting or even who wins the war.⁵

This more abstract thematic treatment of the historical moment conflicts with Schueller’s assessment, while rendering the identification of the American poet’s reliance on Persian influence especially elusive. The poet’s evasion of historical particularity in *Drum-Taps*—through what Lawrence Kramer deems the abandonment of his “cosmic ego” in “Song of Myself” centered upon his “transcendently particular personality”⁶—offers a critical entry point for discovering his imitative aesthetic. Tracking the stylistic and formal effects of Whitman’s foreign mimicry exposes a rather dramatic mid-career change in his verse, wherein he predicates his personal and his nation’s history upon a greater transcendence that attempts to dissolve, rather than to reify, many of the concrete details from American history that Schueller locates elsewhere in his oeuvre.

Rambles Among Words and Emerson’s “Persian Poetry”

In *Rambles Among Words: Their Poetry, History, and Wisdom*, an 1859 book on English etymology credited to William Swinton and partially ghostwritten by Whitman, the poet shrouds in authorial ambiguity his thoughts on the spiritual underpinnings of the Persian language and its literature. *Rambles Among Words* cites a saying from the Iranian prophet Zoroaster regarding “the congruities of material forms to the laws of the soul,”⁷ laying an ancient foundation for Whitman’s belief in spiritual transformation through the very materiality of language itself. Echoing Emerson’s linguistic philosophy wherein “Language is fossil poetry,” quoted as an epigraph to the fourth chapter of *Rambles Among Words*, the book suggests an ultimate “unity within variety” in the evolution of languages (56). “The English Language expresses most typically those tendencies which all show more or less,” Whitman argues in the twelfth chapter, “English in America” (286). He contrasts “the spirit of the modern” in English and “the crystalline structure of the classic mold” in the language’s ancient predecessors, characterizing English as exhibiting “the splendid newness, the aspirations of freedom, individualism, democracy.” The book’s placement of Persian among other languages constitutive of modern English accounts for Whitman’s later

turn to translation of foreign rhetoric. In the eleventh chapter from *Rambles Among Words*, which C. Carroll Hollis convincingly shows emerges from Whitman's own writing,⁸ "the Zend-Avesta of the Persians—primeval documents of the Iranic world" and the Indian Vedas become the figurative foundation of the west where "we see the germs of all we call Europe," in which is seen the "beginnings of the cultures of the occidental world" (269). All appears to emanate from this source: "Science was born in that mind. The intuition of nature, the instinct for political organization and that direct practical normal conduct of life and affairs."

These ghostwritten passages from *Rambles Among Words* typify the way in which nineteenth-century American Romanticism so easily accommodates eastern influences. While the early popularity in America of books like Jonathan Scott's 1811 translation of *The Arabian Nights Entertainments* had done much to generate appreciation of the Orient, the mid-nineteenth century brought a more comprehensive importation of both the spirit and the letter of eastern verse. Poetry translated from specific Persian sources through the British sponsored Oriental Translation Fund began appearing in journals like *The Knickerbocker* and *American Monthly Magazine*. Emerson's translations through the German renderings by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall significantly furthered this introduction of seminal Persian poets like Hafez and Sa'di to New England writers, who began to share their enthusiasm for the mystical underpinning of the poetry in their correspondence with each other as well as in their own journals.⁹ Whitman surely engaged with such literary interests of his time, yet unlike many of his contemporaries, he fails to record his thoughts about his foreign reading practices. Understandably, the lack of textual evidence leads to mere conjecture based on thematic resonances with Persian verse in his writing. More closely considering Emerson's roles as both seminal translator and critic of the poetry as well as Whitman's inspiring mentor, however, grounds the search for influence in his writing and rendering of foreign lines into English. Knowing that Whitman looked closely to his "dear Master"—as he referred to Emerson in the second edition of *Leaves of Grass* in 1856 (358)—and valued his aesthetic enough to first reach out for praise of his work, it is worth considering how much Emerson bases his conception of the ideal American poet who Whitman seemingly longed to become upon the thirteenth-century Persian Sa'di.¹⁰ Mehdi Aminrazavi's claim that Whitman most likely would have read Emerson's poem "Saadi" in imitation of the Persian's writing published in *The Dial* in 1842,¹¹ as well as James Russell's comprehensive reference of Emerson's spiritual relation to the Persian poets as the central influence upon Whitman's verse, invites further and much closer comparative tracking.¹²

If Whitman looked to the Persian poets through Emerson, at least in part, then following his contemporary's response to them offers the needed shift toward his uniquely American perspective on the foreign verse. Instead of simply recording his reflections upon the poetry that Emerson helped introduce to his nation's literary tradition, Whitman makes greater use of it in his own writing, particularly at a crucial turning point in United States history. While by the middle of the nineteenth-century Emerson's influence upon the reading of Persian verse indeed proved pervasive,¹³ looking more specifically at his translations and criticism of it in the context of a dramatic political change—one that simultaneously brought a radical shift in Whitman's aesthetic—reveals how the American poet came to rely more directly on foreign sources rendered through his contemporary to figuratively reconcile the emerging domestic conflict of his nation.

Emerson's close study of Iranian poets critically positions such influences in a discourse through which Whitman could access the classical foreign tradition. As Aminrazavi explains, Persian verse had always seemed to closely resonate with nineteenth-century readers on "philosophical and religious as well as literary levels" (3), but a new kind of "spiritual attraction" to it occurred around the Civil War, when such identifiable themes as "temporality, fleeting nature of life, and the idea of existence being closely connected with suffering" proved especially "therapeutic and soothing to the traumatized American society" (2). That Whitman's Civil War poems reflect such themes similarly noted in Emerson's writing warrants investigating how he looks, through his "dear Master," to Persian verse for comparable solace as well as for the kind of linguistic inspiration he references as ghostwriter. If the Persian poets for Emerson could infinitely extend the spiritual reach of verse, then for Whitman they could be used to subsume all conflict—along with much of the grandiose individualism of his earlier poems—through comparable lyric vision.

Emerson's essay "Persian Poetry," published in *The Atlantic Monthly* just three years after the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, curiously begins with an extended metaphor for the ancient verse tradition of Iran that reconfigures Whitman's point about ancient Persian tradition as the inception of the scientific mind:

The seven masters of the Persian Parnassus, Firdousi, Enweri, Nisami, Dschelaleddin, Saadi, Hafiz, and Dschami, have ceased to be empty names; and others, like Ferideddin Attar, and Omar Chiam, promise to rise in Western estimation. That for which mainly books exist is communicated in these rich extracts. Many qualities go to make a good telescope,—as the largeness of the field, facility of sweeping the meridian, achromatic purity of lenses, and so

forth; but the one eminent value is the space-penetrating power; and there are many virtues in books, but the essential value is the adding of knowledge to our stock by the record of new facts, and, better, by the record of intuitions which distribute facts, and are the formulas which supersede all histories.¹⁴

This concluding preference in books for “intuition” over “facts” becomes the central theme of Whitman’s “When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer,” included among several poems possibly influenced by Persian verse in *Drum-Taps*. As though looking to predecessor texts with such “space-penetrating” telescopic power, Whitman seems to similarly subsume the spirit underpinning the letter of the verse, conflating all significant differences into his lyric vision. Emerson’s association of “the masters of the Persian Parnassus” with the intellectually informed gaze of science further posits a comparable dichotomy found in Whitman’s poem. Responding to the astronomer’s process of fact-finding through “proofs” and “figures” along with the calculation of “charts and diagrams,” the bored speaker “wander’d off” alone into “the mystical moist night air.”¹⁵ His transcendent reaction to the astronomer’s lecture resembles Emerson’s preference for inspiration over scientific deduction in his description of Persian poetry. Similarly, Massud Farzan compares this Whitman poem to Rumi debunking the “donkey of reason” in favor of the sun that proved itself simply as it “rose as proof of the sun.”¹⁶

Whitman-as-speaker in “When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer,” and in other poems in *Drum-Taps*, undergoes a change in his relation to the universe observed by Kramer in the aforementioned surrender of the poet’s well-known “cosmic ego.” Noting how Whitman drops the mention of his nationality in his identification with the universe in the edition of *Leaves of Grass* published immediately following the Civil War, Stephen Cushman further supports the idea that “Whitman’s sense of himself as a kosmos somehow did not square with his sense of himself as American.”¹⁷ Cushman speculates how this change reflects “his confidence in the stability of a national identity” as well as his ambivalence in his “sense of patriotism” (169). Whitman surrendering to the mystery of the universe—instead of attempting to subsume it—seems to follow the trajectory of spiritual overcoming in his writing of the Civil War: while the prose entries of *Memoranda During the War* certainly remain invested in minute details of his life as he tended to injured soldiers, in *Drum-Taps* Whitman appears to lose himself in a greater mystic vision rather than follow his previous attempts to take possession of it. Despite the fair number of historical details that do surface in *Drum-Taps*, mid-career Whitman generally tends toward a greater transcendence in relation to his new wartime subject matter.

Considering his relative abandonment of what had become up to the Civil War his distinctive American identity, where the world he once encountered served his self-aggrandizement, his partial reliance upon Persian models in rendering spiritual his nation's conflict facilitates a kind of "self-annihilation" similar to the Sufi mystic's *fanā*, or "extinction in God."¹⁸ From its first printing Whitman made himself synonymous with his growing collection *Leaves of Grass*, using his own full-bodied image as the frontispiece—substituting for his name, which was absent on the title page—while predicating its first grand poem, later titled "Song of Myself," upon his own self-discovery as "Walt Whitman, a kosmos" (1855 ed., 29). With *Drum-Taps*, however, he tries at least in part to disappear by conflating his biography with the fight to preserve the union of his country during the Civil War. Anticipating Farzan's reading of his late poem "The Persian Lesson" that finds him modeling the mystic's self-transcendence through "complete absorption" where "duality ceases altogether" (581), Whitman states his intention for his mid-career verse in a poem from *Leaves of Grass* titled "To Thee Old Cause," declaring, "my book and the war are one" (1871 ed., 12). Such a statement can be taken in the spirit of a pun (a ubiquitous literary device in Persian verse), wherein both the war and his verse "are won" through his greater aspiration toward Platonic unification.

In addition to truly giving much of his life through the well-known sacrifice of his time and energy tending to thousands of wounded soldiers, this Romantic poet who previously wrote endless lines about his physical prowess and sensual indulgences curiously begins to demonstrate the kind of self-denial representative of the Sufi's ascetic turning away from the material world toward a commitment to abstinence.¹⁹ After the attack on union soldiers at Fort Sumter, he notes in his journal:

I have this hour, this day resolved to inaugurate a sweet, clean-blooded body by ignoring all drinks but water and pure milk—and all fat meats, late suppers—a great body—a purged, cleansed, spiritualized invigorated body.²⁰

Around this time Whitman's eroticism—which has been compared to the Persian poets in its view of "sexual union and the various aspects of the material world as forming a necessary prelude to spiritual reality" (LeMaster and Jahan, 178)²¹—further follows the Sufis in its transformation to a greater spiritual cause. As Robert Roper observes, Whitman sublimated homosexual feelings during the war in service to wounded soldiers with a more "mystical kind of love."²² Further showing how his actual biography and personal details extended toward this greater transcendence around the Civil War, his mystical surrender also

manifests in his prose. As Amy Parsons observes in the last entry about the war in *Specimen Days*, Whitman makes setting aside “the violent passions of war” as “the necessary condition for future loving, physical bonds between the living after the conflict is over, beyond the hospitals and battlefields and beyond his own specific affectionate body.”²³

While the metaphor of the telescope at the beginning of Emerson’s “Persian Poetry” offers a way of conceptualizing how Whitman inverts the typical gaze of himself as a “kosmos” toward what he saw as a greater humanistic universality beyond the Civil War, Emerson’s translation of lines from the twelfth-century Persian Sufi poet Farid ud-Din Attar at the end of the essay presents a more tangible imitative model for lyric transcendence of an ideally unified nation. Emerson’s translated excerpt summarizes *The Conference of the Birds*, a more than four-thousand-line poem relating the story of a flock of thirty birds searching for the bird of supreme wisdom, known as the simurgh, or “Simorg.” At the end of their spiritually transformative journey across seven valleys—each of which represents a stage in the learning process of Sufism—they come to realize that all along they themselves collectively represent the king bird whom they have been seeking. This insight puns upon the Persian name of the bird, with “si” as the number “thirty” and “murch” meaning “bird.” Emerson aptly captures the revelation in the following excerpt:

They knew not, amazed, if they
Were either this or that.
They saw themselves all as Simorg,
Themselves in the eternal Simorg.
When to the Simorg up they looked,
They beheld him among themselves . . . (264)

True to the “intuitions” which “supersede all histories” in the metaphor of the telescope—and evoking Whitman’s ghostwritten theory of English as an a-temporal “[convergence of] the spirit of the modern”—Emerson claims to cite the longer passage from which these lines of verse have been taken “as a proof of the identity of mysticism in all periods,” adding that “the tone is quite modern” (263).

Dramatizing this spiritual transcendence through a modern reorientation of such ancient mysticism, Whitman begins to lose his definitive identity from “Song of Myself” as he attempts in *Drum-Taps* to transcend the politics of his American nineteenth century by making himself the domestic version of this foreign bird of wisdom:

From Paumanok starting, I fly like a bird,
Around and around to soar, to sing the idea of all;
To the north betaking myself, to sing there arctic songs,
To Kanada, 'till I absorb Kanada in myself—to Michigan then,
To Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, to sing their songs, (they are inimitable;)
Then to Ohio and Indiana to sing theirs—to Missouri and
 Kansas and Arkansas to sing theirs,
To Tennessee and Kentucky—to the Carolinas and Georgia, to sing theirs,
To Texas, and so along up toward California, to roam accepted everywhere;
To sing first, (to the tap of the war-drum, if need be,)
The idea of all—of the western world, one and inseparable,
And then the song of each member of These States. (18)

Rewriting the origins of the source poem, Whitman audaciously makes himself the mythical bird by starting his own journey from his preferred name for his native Long Island. He further rewrites Attar's individuated birds becoming one with the simurgh as separate states belonging to a greater nation, "one and inseparable." After getting the bird's eye view from the top of North America in "Kanada," he encompasses clusters of representative states throughout his country threatened with separation through the Civil War. This includes Missouri, site of the failed 1820 compromise that attempted to keep slavery from expanding into new territories, and Kansas, center of the 1850 Act that undermined that earlier agreement. Seeking to unify with his verse like Attar before him, he will "sing first" the grand "idea of all," even if he must do so, ultimately like Lincoln, to the rhythm of the "war-drum." No longer the individuated poet containing multitudes, the multitude of states he longs to see reconciled contain him.

Contrary to the analogical correspondence between literary traditions suggested by Fayeze and Farzan, Attar's poem through Emerson's translation offers a possible source used by Whitman at a crucial turning point in his writing to lose himself in the greater ideal of his nation. Singing "The idea of all—of the western world," he seeks to collapse all dichotomies, most fundamentally the one between himself and his country, thereby realizing through greater spiritual connection "the theme of political union that became the overarching figure of his life and his work."²⁴ As Roger Asselineau explains, Whitman "exalted the Union because it had become for him a sacred and mystical notion to which everything, if necessary, must be sacrificed."²⁵ Reconsidering Whitman's surrender to the greater cause in the context of Sufism, upon which he partially appears to base it, his writing of the Civil War places his nation in the role of the Persian "Beloved" as referenced by G. M. Fayeze in his comparison of the American poet

to Rumi, wherein the divine “consists of the union of absolute objectivity with absolute subjectivity.”²⁶ True to Jahar Schueller’s reading of Whitman that elsewhere positions the Orient through an “amative poetic persona who, embodying the nation, would embrace the world” (175), here the poet further attempts to transcend the material struggle for union by taking flight into abstraction as he fuses himself into “the idea of all . . . one and inseparable.”

The Influence of Alger’s *The Poetry of the East*

Though the influence of the Persian verse tradition through Emerson remains somewhat speculative, Whitman’s specific imitation of poems and ideas from the introduction of William Rounseville Alger’s *The Poetry of East* dramatically exposes his reliance upon foreign models when writing *Drum-Taps*. As an intermediary text between his own writing that he attempts to fuse with the war, Whitman viewed this anthology of translations as extending his own self-sacrifice as a poet to his greater cause. He says of the collection:

Have often read (dabbled) in the ‘Introduction to Oriental Poetry’ pp 3 to 92— & over & over again. —(the stain on the edges is from breaking a bottle of Virginia wine in a trunk where it was stored, down South in the war). two or three of my jaunts thro’ the war I carried this vol: in my trunk—read in it—sometimes to hospital groups, to while away time.²⁷

Even Whitman’s statements that he never read his own verse to injured soldiers, opting instead for Shakespeare or this book of poetry from the Orient with an emphasis on Persian verse, exemplifies his ongoing surrender as center of his own “kosmos.”²⁸ While around the time of the war he was also reading Dante and Virgil—“perhaps in search of an epic model for his war poems,” as Erkkila suggests (212)—he gravitated toward the Persian tradition described by Emerson in his essay as more predisposed to short lyrics than epics (“Persian Poetry,” 218). This stylistic shift proves further representative of his cutting back upon his tendency of making an epic of himself. Much like his commitment to an ascetic life, which includes the aforementioned redirection of his sexual appetite, his response to his nation’s traumatic conflict mirrors the Sufi mystics’ abandonment of their own ego-centric claims upon the world.

Staining the edges of his book with wine from Virginia domesticates the most definitive trope of classical poets from Iran, which in their Sufi mystic tradition reflects divine intoxication. The stain is evident in the image of his personal copy—currently in Special Collections at the University of Virginia Library—literally re-framing the trope’s foreign origin with the broken Virginia

bottle and speaking to his greater figurative repositioning of classical Persian poetry within the American Civil War (see Figure 1). On the book's title page, he signed his name in blue pencil, which he used further to draw vertical lines along key passages of the almost one-hundred-page introduction he claimed to have read "over & over again." Significantly, though Alger's extensive essay covers an array of Oriental poetry, including his classifications of "Arab," "Hindu," "Hebrew," and "Sanskrit," six of the twelve vertical markings were made by Whitman in paragraphs referencing Persian Sufi verse.

A further paratextual examination demonstrates how Whitman relied on Alger's *The Poetry of the East* as a kind of model for his own self-portrait in later life, a shift which appears mid-career with his writing of *Drum-Taps*. The frontispiece and epigraph facing the title page alone appear to capture Whitman's Persian gaze (see Figure 2). The epigraph reads:

Young and enterprising in the West;
 Old and meditative in the East.
 Turn, O Youth! With intellectual zest,
 Where the Sage invites thee to the feast.

The profile of a western "Youth" looks to the "old and meditative" East, toward a figure reminiscent of the "greybeard sufi" in Whitman's late poem "A Persian Lesson" that Farzan shows most likely represents the American poet himself (582). The iconic beard of "the Sage" of the east resembles both photographs of an older Whitman and the "greybeard sufi" from his poem who stands "on the slope of a teeming Persian rose-garden," towering over "young priests and students" (*Leaves of Grass* 1891-1892 ed., 418). Here, Whitman makes the mid-career visual transformation from younger to older poet, a move coinciding with William Douglas O'Connor's 1866 pamphlet, "The Good Gray Poet," that bestowed on Whitman his popular sobriquet.

Highly relevant to Whitman's reliance upon this book for imitative models of his war poetry, the western youth holds a rifle with one hand on the end of the barrel. The gun's verticality runs parallel to the scroll held by the elder sage and extends to the greater point of the staff in his other hand, aimed toward the sky. Interposed between this foregrounding of transcendence over violence, a mother adorned in eastern clothing with a stringed instrument at her lap looks down upon a child in a turban (dressed much like the old man) near her breast. Considering that Whitman called the Civil War the "umbilicus of my whole career,"²⁹ this mother and child warrants special consideration. Schueller suggests that "the venerable Asian mother, fixed in the past, has no materiality

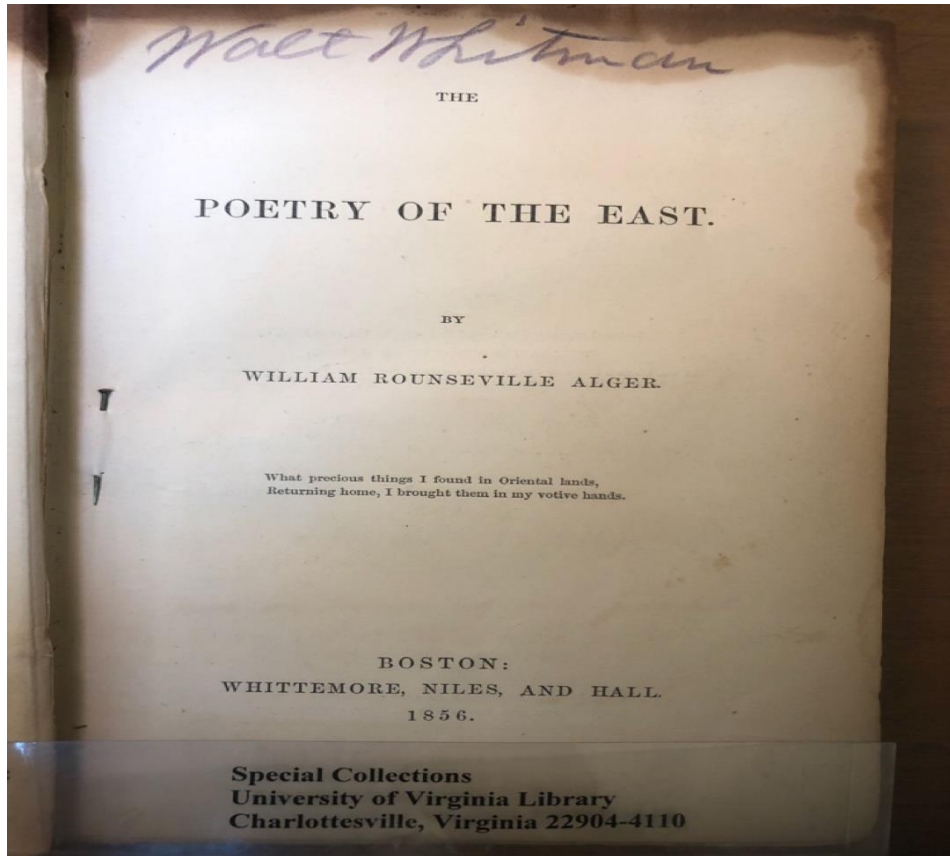


Figure 1: Scan of Whitman's personal copy of William Rounseville Alger's *The Poetry of the East* (Boston: Whittemore, Niles, and Hall, 1856). From Special Collections, University of Virginia Library.

or presentness. Asia both is and is not” (189). Whitman’s general tendency to “exclude the erotic and represent the Orient/Asia” through an “asexual maternal” (Schueller, 188) supports the thematic shift in his Civil War verse away from his aforementioned personal expressions of sexuality. In this respect, the phallic transport of a young man’s rifle to the old wise man’s staff informs the eastern woman nurturing the child with Oedipal implications.³⁰ What Schueller identifies as a “return of the New World Child to the Old World mother” in Whitman’s writing (183) plays into Whitman’s reliance here on both the poetry and image in Alger’s anthology of translations. Along with providing treats for wounded soldiers, Whitman “fed” them lines from this text in his more feminine nurturing role antithetical to fighting in battle. As Schueller further explains, Whitman’s “spiritual-maternal Asia promised both the oneness and unity that could heal national wounds and the transcending of history” (194-195).

This depiction of the passive mother nurturing her son in the background and the frontispiece’s epigraph reinforces Whitman’s turn from the violence and industriousness of his American nineteenth century toward the spirituality of Asia. Interestingly, Whitman’s biographer and disciple Horace Traubel echoes the epigraph’s invitation to “Turn . . . with intellectual zest” when noting how



Young and enterprising is the West;
Old and meditative is the East.
Turn, O Youth! with intellectual zest,
Where the Sage invites thee to his feast.

Figure 2: Frontispiece and epigram from Alger's *The Poetry of the East*.

Whitman read Alger's anthology "with zest and till the end of his days."³¹ What Roper takes as "a mystical kind of love" in Whitman's tending to the wounded seems to appear in Alger's excerpted translation of a poem without author citation, titled "The True God":

Each tear forlorn that trickles down man's cheeks,
He marks, and pities every aching sigh;
To give them compensation ever seeks;
Their life-woes shares; and takes them when they die. (119)

Traubel notes Whitman quoted these lines to him from memory, and they are distinctively marked in his personal copy of Alger's anthology. Considering his strong interest in the translation, its influence possibly surfaces in the conclusion of "The Wound-Dresser," as a speaker resembling the American poet tending to wounded soldiers declares:

Some suffer so much—I recall the experience sweet and sad;
(Many a soldier's loving arms about this neck have cross'd and rested,
Many a soldier's kiss dwells on these bearded lips.) (*Drum-Taps*, 34)

While Whitman retains some sense of his lyric identity, he tends to follow these comparative translation models by positioning the speaker and his greater subject within the realm of the divine.

The closer and more conclusive the evidence of his direct imitations from Alger's English renderings, the more his verse approaches such transcendence. The clear influence of a couplet by Attar titled "The Grave a Green Tent" on Whitman's poem "Camps of Green" (*Drum-Taps*, 57) supports both Whitman's formal interest in Persian verse while warranting closer examination of how he makes spiritual use of it. Alger's complete translation reads: "A furloughed soldier, here I sleep from battle spent, / And in the resurrection I shall strike my tent" (259). Whitman's poem makes the same play upon the green tent of the grave; however, he expands upon the basic idea by unifying soldiers of the past to the present, to those who fought in the Civil War:

NOT alone our camps of white, O soldiers,
When, as order'd forward, after a long march,
Footsore and weary, soon as the light lessens, we halt for the night;
Some of us so fatigued, carrying the gun and knapsack, dropping asleep in our tracks;
Others pitching the little tents, and the fires lit up begin to sparkle;
Outposts of pickets posted, surrounding, alert through the dark,
And a word provided for countersign, careful for safety; . . . (*Drum-Taps*, 57)

Developing Attar's image of a single "furloughed soldier," Whitman turns the brief spiritual Persian couplet into a realistic, domestic scene of battle-weary infantry, rendering the Sufi mystic version of an afterlife into the tangible, material world. Details that would cement his poem in the Civil War, however, prove relatively wanting, as though Whitman returns to his theorizing of the Persian underpinnings of the English language and Zoroaster's demonstration of "the congruities of material forms to the laws of the soul." Though greatly expanding Attar's couplet, he nevertheless follows the translation's basic Platonic structuring that extends back to his reading of the Persian prophet, similarly juxtaposing the living soldier and spiritual resurrection. The opening stanza of Whitman's poem concludes:

Till to the call of the drummers at daybreak loudly beating the drums,
We rise up refresh'd, the night and sleep pass'd over, and resume our journey,
Or proceed to battle.

Turning towards the original Persian source text, the following stanza reveals that occupants of the tents now camp in the afterlife:

Lo, the camps of the tents of green,
Which the days of peace keep filling, and the days of war keep filling,
With a mystic army, (is it too order'd forward? Is it too only halting awhile,
Till night and sleep pass over?)

Modelling the collapse of all dichotomies to achieve something like the divine unification of the simurgh, he places "those of camps of green" belonging to civilians—the "parents, children, husbands, wives," "the old and young"—alongside those of "our corps and generals all, and the President over the corps and generals all." The pithy last stanza in the voice of those from the afterlife directly references Attar's couplet in its address to the soldiers that "we too camp in our place in the bivouac-camps of green." Belonging now to the divine resurrection, they rise without need for a "drummer to beat the morning drum."

Whitman's "By the Bivouac's Fitful Flame" is another poem developing an Oriental model predicated upon the spiritual transcendence of war: "The Spirit-Caravan," a poem Alger cites and categorizes in his introduction under the category of "Arabic poetry" without source author attribution. Consider first the opening by Whitman:

By the bivouac's fitful flame,
A procession winding around me, solemn and sweet and slow;—but first I note,

The tents of the sleeping army, the fields' and woods' dim outline,
 The darkness, lit spots of kindled fire—the silence;
 Like a phantom far or near an occasional figure moving; . . . (*Drum-Taps*, 16)

Compare this to lines from Alger's translation, featuring a similarly sleepless speaker:

On the desert sand bivouacked and silent lay our motley throng;
 My Bedouin Arabs slumbered the unbridled steeds among;
 Far away the moonlight quivered o'er old Nilus' mountain chain,
 Dromedary-bones lay bleaching, scattered o'er the sandy plain.

Wide awake I lay: —my caftan's ample folds were o'er me spread,
 Covering breast and feet; my saddle formed a pillow for my head;
 There I thrust my purse, together with the date tree's fruit; and near
 I had placed my naked sabre, with my musket and my spear. (50-51)

Whitman's speaker notes "the silence" and "the darkness," juxtaposed with the "lit spots of kindled fire," echoing the foreign poem's scene, in which "All was silent, save the rustle by the dying embers made." In the firelight of the latter "ghastly shapes are gliding by" in what soon becomes a cinematic rendering of an "endless" spiritual army that invades the camp throughout the night until "the morning breezes will consign them to their tombs." Whitman also brings the spirit world to his camp, with the speaker suggestively noting "an occasional figure moving" phantom-like in the fire's low light. Rather than an army of ghosts, the speaker encounters "thoughts, O tender and wond'rous thoughts, / Of life and death—of home and the past and loved, and of those that are far away" that "wind in procession" around the sleeping camp. These American soldiers' thoughts of home domesticate and further rewrite the ghostly presence of Arab "troops of phantom riders" who "in procession haste" to pray with their "young maidens" at "Mecca's shrine." These lines from Arabic quoted in Alger's introduction right before his longer section on Persian poetry offer a pattern from which Whitman can use spiritually-informed translated verse to transcend much of his nation's conflict. Whitman's reliance on foreign translations to render the war into greater Platonic abstraction demonstrates his frequent attempts to transform the conflict into much greater transcendence, and to achieve an ultimate reconciliation.

The translated verse offers Whitman a means to fuse his American voice into grand, all-encompassing patriotic appeals—in addition to forging spiritual unity—which, like the simorg, facilitate a national overcoming of war's

harsh reality. His use of the following translation, “Bestir Thee Betimes,” from another unknown source (presumably Persian, given its juxtaposition with a Hafez poem in Alger’s anthology), especially demonstrates how he conflates his aesthetic and political intentions with Sufi mysticism:

Oh! be thou zealous in thy youth;
Fill every day with noble toils,
Fight for the victories of Truth,
And deck thee with her deathless spoils.
For those whose lives are in retreat,
Their valor and ambition flown,
In vain the ’larum drum is beat,
In vain the battle trumpet blown! (Alger, 165)

Tapping into the theme of *carpe diem* in Persian verse with which mid-nineteenth-century New England poets greatly resonated (See Aminrazavi, 2), Whitman reprises the poem’s “’larum” with “Beat! Beat! Drums!” (*Drum-Taps*, 38). Calling on the same instruments of trumpets and drums, he advises to “Mind not the timid—mind not the weeper or prayer; / Mind not the old man beseeching the young man,” echoing the invitation in the Persian poem’s first line to be “zealous in thy youth.” More a poet of itemized cataloging than his Persian counterparts who opt for broad abstraction, Whitman expands upon those “whose lives are in retreat” by introducing the newly married “bridegroom,” “the peaceful farmer,” the church “congregation,” along with “the singer,” “the talker,” “the lawyer,” “the timid,” and even “the dead.” Rather than subsuming these facets of American life into his previous lyric self who once proclaimed, “I contain multitudes,” all must now be forsaken for the greater call to battle. The poem communicates an uncompromising mandate to leave all recognizable quotidian creature comforts of home and work—those that once defined Whitman’s earlier writing—for self-sacrifice to the nation. Whitman importantly echoes the same admonition to avoid “in vain” hearing the call of both drum and trumpet and to instead “fight for the victories of Truth.”

“Song of the Banner at Daybreak”

A close reading of Whitman’s long Civil War poem, “Song of the Banner at Daybreak,” reveals his extensive imitation of a translation of a poem Alger presumably attributes to Ferriddudin Attar of Tun—coming two centuries after the more famous Ferriddudin Attar of Neishabour, poet of “The Conference of

the Birds”—and offers perhaps the most extreme example of his relying upon foreign verse in his writing of *Drum-Taps* for both patriotic and spiritual transcendence.³² That “Song of the Banner at Daybreak” seems to signal a distinct shift in his mid-career writing calls for new considerations as to how and why he comes to use imitation to effect such a different style. Erkkila cites “the dramatic presentation” of this poem along with “the metric regularity of ‘Beat! Beat! Drums!’” as his need for “greater artistic control” over the disruption of war (211). An analysis of Whitman’s reliance upon Persian translations as rhetorical models—with Alger’s and Emerson’s renderings often in rhyme and English prose—greatly expands upon such a claim. Though critical analysis of Whitman’s earlier work continues to highlight its formal resemblance to the foreign poetry, a search for further equivalence reveals how his imitations during the Civil War became especially inventive in borrowing certain themes, diction, image, and metaphor. “Song of the Banner at Daybreak,” in particular, reveals the extent to which following the structuring of translations from Persian and their underpinnings of Sufi mysticism accounts for much of what Kramer assesses as the great shift occurring in the voice of *Drum-Taps* relative to Whitman’s earlier verse: “a dispersal and multiplication of voices” wherein even “many of the direct first-person lyrics cannot unhesitatingly be assigned to the normative voice of Whitman ‘himself’” (xvii).

Yet ironically, through a voice not entirely his own, “Song of the Banner at Daybreak” proves radically emblematic of Whitman’s distinctive aesthetic as a poet of the American Renaissance with verse written as “a response to and an attempt to manage the disintegrative forces of democracy and technology in the nineteenth century” (Erkkila, 11). The nameless poet—closely associated with Whitman himself (see *Arbour*, 176)—who sets up the argument of a father trying to convince his son to ignore the banner and pennant calling him to war in favor of domestic prosperity, ultimately follows the boy in his transcendence over the material picture. “I hear and see not strips of cloth alone,” the Poet says, “I hear the jubilant shouts of millions of men—I hear LIBERTY!” (*Drum-Taps*, 12). The aforementioned Sufi *fanā* allows Whitman a means by which to ultimately overcome what Erkkila posits as perhaps an even greater fear than his country going to war: “the possibility that the American people would sacrifice the principle of Union in the interest of continued wealth and prosperity” (194). Insofar as the Poet surrenders his definite lyric identity and the child sees beyond what Erkkila calls “the dough-faced politics of the Father to the absolute value of Union,” Whitman and his readers follow the Persian poets in divine dissolution of the self.

Whitman's "Song of the Banner of Daybreak" predicates the father's comparable plea to his son determined to leave behind the same comforts of home related in "Beat! Beat! Drums!" by completely giving himself to the symbols of flag and pennant. The crux of the tension between materialism and spirituality manifests in the same dialogic mode, which stylistically lends to Whitman's imitation some of the "borrowed voices" that Kramer observes throughout much of *Drum-Taps*. Consider first in the Persian poem, titled by Alger as "God's Boy-Lover: Or, the Mystic's Suicide," the father's reasoning with his son as to why the perilous sea voyage is worth the risk, provided they survive it:

. . . "All the world, my child, behold,
Driven right and left, and near and far, by lust of gold.
'Tis sweet to sail the sea, for when the danger's o'er,
Great wealth and honor is the fruit the danger bore." (Alger, 256)

This passage in Whitman's copy of Alger's book shows evidence of his attention with scribbled circles in the same blue pencil that he used to mark the anthology's introduction, and it sounds quite similar to the father advising his son to focus on similar material gains in "Song of the Banner at Daybreak":

. . . But look you, my babe,
Look at these dazzling things in the houses, and see you the money-shops opening;
And see you the vehicles preparing to crawl along the streets with goods:
These! ah, these! how valued and toil'd for, these!
How envied by all the earth! (*Drum-Taps*, 10)

Both sons are summoned by forces much greater than the voices of their respective fathers. In the Persian poem, after initial resistance to the sea-voyage for fear of losing his life, the boy is called to self-martyrdom: "A revelation saw I from the flood upshot, / Saw rise from the sea, an image of the Absolute." Whitman's boy relates a similar beckoning to his father: "Father what is that in the sky beckoning to me with long finger? / And what does it say to me all the while?" When further interrogating the respective summoning to surrender their security in the material world to a greater spiritual calling, both boys confront resistance from paternal authority. The Persian father condescendingly dismisses the revelatory wisdom his son receives that advises him to give his life to the ocean:

“Dear soul!” then said the father, “cease from such discourse:
Before an old man boastest thou thy wisdom’s source?
O infant, with the shell of Law be thou content:
Truth absolute is not as sport to children’s sent.” (Alger, 257)

Relentlessly, the son insists upon heeding the call to ultimate self-surrender, committing the “mystic’s suicide” named in the poem’s title:

“Father,” replies the youth, “my eye towards home is turned;
I see the way for which my heart has ever yearned.
The sea’s a symbol how one must destroy self’s root:
Upon the inmost selfhood now exults my foot.”

The father responds with passionate though reasoned authority, as if condescendingly implying his son is still but an infant, “In rage the Father cries: ‘Silence this instance keep, / Pert babbler!’”

As the Persian boy looks to the sea for the dissolution of self and consequent spiritual realization, the son in Whitman’s poem similarly fixates upon the image of the “banner and pennant” representative of a collective American movement toward the greater cause of war that surfaces as a divine calling:

O father, it is alive—it is full of people—it has children!
O now it seems to me it is talking to its children!
I hear it—it talks to me—O it is wonderful!
O it stretches—it spreads and runs so fast! O my father,
It is so broad, it covers the whole sky! (*Drum-Taps*, 11)

Whitman’s father similarly attempts to silence his son’s compulsion to lose himself in the comparably oceanic symbols of banner and pennant:

Cease, cease, my foolish babe,
What you are saying is sorrowful to me—much it displeases me;
Behold with the rest, again I say—behold not banners and pennants aloft;
But the well-prepared pavements behold—and mark the solid-wall’d houses.

Both American and Persian sons undergo a spiritual conversion relative to their fathers’ respective commitments to the materialistic world. Truer to the Sufi wisdom favoring “knowledge of the heart” over intellectual knowledge (Schimmel, 4), the Persian son claims, “I see the way for which my heart has always yearned.” As Mahnaz explains of Whitman’s “A Persian Lesson,” the American poet receives comparable insight from Sufi mysticism:

The most important lesson Whitman learned from the ‘greybeard Sufi’ is that logic and discursive reasoning have never provided all the answers and that the solution to the baffling mystery of life lies in a mystical surrender of the limited human ego to the infinite self in an act of love. (160)

Even more than forgoing the material world, the mystic children of both poems challenge the materiality of language itself. Accused by his father of being a “pert babbler,” the Persian boy expresses his inability to express: “‘Thou understand’st me not,’ the love-drunk stripling cries / ‘Know in each soul the hidden Loved One slumbering lies.’” As though returning to his own semantic theory of English’s Persian influence from *Rambles Among Words* which Romantically privileges “the intuition of nature,” The Poet—Whitman’s otherwise nameless speaker of the poem—declares the ineffability of writing relative to a song’s transcendence over discursive logic:

Words! book-words! what are you?
Words no more, for hearken and see,
My song is there in the open air—and I must sing,
With the banner and pennant a-flapping. (*Drum-Taps*, 9)

In this respect, both poems demonstrate Rumi’s declaration that even the words of his verse seemed a poor metaphor compared to the spiritual ecstasy he experienced.³³

“Song of the Banner at Daybreak” further demonstrates how Whitman uses the Sufi mystic’s *fanā* to his own thematic ends, both personalizing and politicizing his imitation to drum up support for unifying the nation. In the Persian source poem, the father, learning the lesson of surrender from his “mystic” son, finds himself compelled to follow the boy into the sea:

As in the son a pure snow-flake dissolves to tears,
The beauteous youth beneath the flood so disappears.
The father gazes where that plunge a gurgling makes:
A piercing groan from out his anguished bosom breaks.
Then, realizing all, sudden he looks around,
Steps to the ship’s frail edge,—is gone with silent bound. (Alger, 258)

Responding to this model, “Song of the Banner at Daybreak” radically disrupts the relationship, opposing the materialistic father to the spiritual surrender of the son. Consequently, Whitman begins turning against his own well-established aesthetic of his earlier verse, divorcing the means by which his ego “contains multitudes” of seemingly endless objects in the world. In response to his father

listing things that the son can use to root himself to the world—“the well-prepared pavements” and “the solid-wall’d houses”—the son declares his loyalty to more abstract symbols. His desire to become one with the banner and pennant comes especially close to his Persian counterpart’s proclamation that “[t]he sea’s a symbol how one must destroy self’s root.” As the American boy explains:

O my father, I like not the houses;
 They will never to me be anything—nor do I like money;
 But to mount up there I would like, O father dear—that banner I like;
 That pennant I would be, and must be. (*Drum-Taps*, 13)

The father protests, ultimately to no avail:

Child of mine you fill me with anguish,
 To be that pennant would be too fearful,
 Little you know what it is this day, and henceforth forever;
 It is to gain nothing, but risk and defy everything; . . . (*Drum-Taps*, 13-14)

Without what Burton Hatlen reads as Whitman’s political agenda to stir the public for war,³⁴ the Persian poet can focus on giving his father and son to a complete union with “the Loved One.” Through the *fanā* of the son becoming “lost to the self,” the poem ends in silence, an ultimate counterpoint to the father’s earlier vain attempts to silence the debate. As the Persian poem concludes, witnesses to the double martyrdom can only watch around the perimeter of the mysterious center: “Like points within a circle the crew all dumb: / Spell-bound, each stands, like a pearl in the muscle numb” (259).

Though less comprehensive than the sea as grand maternal metaphor for what the child in the Persian poem calls “the Absolute” that stands in contradistinction to his father’s authority, the banner in Whitman’s imitation allows the nameless poet to similarly conclude with a negation of the material world identified with established patriarchal order. Here especially, Whitman exemplifies Schueller’s assessment of American Orientalism’s trope of “the venerable Asian mother, fixed in the past” without any “materiality or presentness”:

I too leave the rest—great as it is, it is nothing—
 houses, machines are nothing—I see them not;
 I see but you, O warlike pennant! O banner so broad, with stripes, I sing you only,
 Flapping up there in the wind. (*Drum-Taps*, 16)

Unlike the Sufi surrender in the translation of the Persian poem, however, the boy of Whitman’s poem paradoxically attempts to lose himself through symbols

limited to the materialistic world that he attempts to dismiss. In this respect, Whitman's reliance upon foreign models for the poems in *Drum-Taps* somewhat displaces the divine from his Persian models with his version of an idealized Platonic patriotism, illustrating what Hatlen observes as "a radical falling off" in his verse around 1860 and "a monistic will toward unity" that "restricts or even stifles the free play of semiosis." While Hatlen argues that the poem "consistently operates at an abstract, ideological level," Whitman's limited image of the flag diverges from the divine ocean into which the Persian boy surrenders, and instead attempts to redirect the *fanā* toward Whitman's own patriotic ends. "Song of the Banner at Daybreak" thus perhaps too forcibly conflates the eastern and western sensibilities defined by Alger's introduction:

This mysticism, which is the soul's groping in a world of symbols after realities too vast and elusive, occupies the same place in Eastern literature that is filled with sentimentality in the modern literature of the West. (80)

In part, the problem for Whitman concerns his substitution of the banner for the sea, a finite and sentimental symbol far more limited in scope than the mystical expansiveness of the ocean used by the Persian poet.

Despite this concluding deviation from "the Absolute" in favor of patriotic symbolism, Whitman's writing prior to *Drum-Taps* follows the same kind of predilection for losing self in the sea. In her reading of the 1860 poem "As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life," for example, Elena Furlanetto finds a comparable loss of self in both "Sufi imagery and the shores of Paumanok."³⁵ She further relates the "drowning fantasies" in Whitman's earlier work, a manifestation of the *fanā*, anticipating his reading of Alger's translation of "God's Boy-Lover: Or, the Mystic's Suicide":

If the Sufi resorts to drowning imagery to express the quest for the union with god and attainment of the ultimate divine truth, Whitman also offers metaphorical drowning as a path to self-awareness and a more vibrant poetic word. (107)

In later poems, too, Whitman continues meditating on the loss of self in the mystic ocean. Arthur Ford further traces this Sufi imagery of the ocean in his analysis of Whitman's late-life poem "A Persian Lesson," noting how "the concept of ultimate reunion of soul with an original source is not uncommon in Whitman's poetry," in which "the central urge in every atom" returns it "to the Great Float or the Mother of the Sea."³⁶

In *Drum-Taps*, Whitman places upon himself the onus of reconciling his

nation's conflict within his personal surrender. He turns to the sea as grand maternal symbol to settle the politics of his nation as he attempts to depict his umbilical connection to what he calls "this time and land we swim in," which despite its "conflicting fluctuations and despair & hope" he senses is led "by invisible hand, a definite purport & idea."³⁷ Persian verse in translation, predicated upon the transcendence of such idealized revelation of the divine, thus offers him a qualified means to become the spiritual unifier of his nation. Just as he follows the simurgh in "From Paumanok Starting I Fly Like a Bird" to unify the states of his nation, he further follows "God's Boy-Lover," who uses the same all-encompassing metaphor of the unifying Persian bird:

Dear father, thou know'st not the mystery aright:
 Let me reveal to thee the Absolute's own light.
 Know, father, in the heart I dwell of the Alone:
 Simurg am I, the mountain Infinite my throne. (Alger, 257)

Whitman turns to verse in translation and mimics his foreign source authors in an attempt to transform himself into comparable divine realization redirected toward his nation. While he succeeded in becoming a uniquely American poet around the Civil War, this comparative reading necessitates further considerations as to how much Whitman imitated the Persian poets he read with such "zest" and the extent to which he fused himself into the Persian sources. American poet and critic Elsa Barker detected the influence of Attar on Whitman's work but qualified her comparative reading by declaring that "Whitman was not a disciple of Orientals or anyone else . . . he was himself."³⁸ Becoming "himself" in *Drum-Taps*, however, entailed getting lost in the mysticism underpinning his foreign models in service to the great cause of unifying his nation. Locating his authorial presence in his writing of the Civil War must therefore include further searches through Persian verse in translation. In Alger's translation of "God's Boy Lover," the boy upon whom Whitman predicates his own "Child" has eyes described as "heavenly blue" (255). It is a rather suspicious color for a Persian, strangely more applicable to Whitman himself, suggesting the transformation of his American vision through an Orientalist gaze toward Iran.

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Notes

- 1 Malini Johar Schueller's *U.S. Orientalisms: Race, Nation, and Gender in Literature, 1790-1890* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), for example, predicates a comparative analysis upon Whitman's specific references to the Orient in "A Passage to India" as well as "A Broadway Pageant" (see 175-198). Similarly, Stephen Tapscott's "Leaves of Myself: Whitman's Egypt in 'Song of Myself,'" *American Literature* 50 (1978), 49-73, relies upon the poet's foreign allusions based on his knowledge and fascination with Egyptology.
- 2 J. R. LeMaster and Sabahat Jahan, *Whitman and the Persian Poets: A Study in Literature and Religion* (Bethesda, MD: IBEX, 2009).
- 3 John McCormick, "Walt Whitman: Orientalist or Nationalist?" in *Another Music: Polemics and Pleasures* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 71-84. See page 71.
- 4 William Rounseville Alger, *The Poetry of the East* (Boston: Whittemore, Niles, and Hall, 1856).
- 5 Cristanne Miller, "Drum-Taps: Revisions and Reconciliation," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 26 (Spring 2009), 171-196. See page 179
- 6 Lawrence Kramer, "Introduction." Walt Whitman, *Drum-Taps, the Complete 1865 Edition* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2015), ix-xxiii. See page xvi.
- 7 William Swinton, *Rambles among Words: Their Poetry, History, and Wisdom* (London: Sampson Low, Son & Company, 1859), 31.
- 8 C. Carroll Hollis, "Walt Whitman and William Swinton: a Cooperative Friendship," *American Literature* 30 (1959), 425-449. See 439-440.
- 9 Phillip Edmonson, "The Persians of Concord." *Sufism and American Literary Masters* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), 213-219. See pages 214-215.
- 10 Roger Sedarat, *Emerson in Iran: The American Appropriation of Persian Poetry* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2019), 91-93.
- 11 Mehdi Aminrazavi, ed. "Introduction." *Sufism and American Literary Masters* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), 1-14. See page 8.
- 12 James Russell, "Emerson and the Persians," *Lecture Series: Near East in the Mind of America* (Harvard University, 2002).
- 13 John. D. Yohannan, "American Transcendentalists' Interpretations of Sufism," 191-212. See page 198; *Sufism and American Literary Masters* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), 1-14.
- 14 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Persian Poetry." First published in *Atlantic Monthly* 1 (1858). Reprinted in "Persian Poetry," *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson: Letters and Social Aims*, ed. Alfred Ferguson, Joseph Slater, et al., vol. 8 (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2010), 237. Hereafter, "Persian Poetry."
- 15 Walt Whitman, *Drum-Taps and Sequel to Drum-Taps* (New York, Washington D.C., 1865-1866). Available on the *Walt Whitman Archive*. Hereafter, "Drum-Taps."

- 16 Massud Farzan, "Whitman and Sufism: Toward a Persian Lesson," *American Literature* 47 (1976), 572-582. See page 577.
- 17 Stephen Cushman, "Whitman and Patriotism," *Virginia Quarterly Review* 81 (2005), 163-177. See page 168.
- 18 Eric Geoffrey, *Introduction to Sufism: The Inner Path of Islam*, trans. Roger Gaetani (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2010), 14.
- 19 Annmarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2011), 109-111.
- 20 Gay Wilson Allen, as quoted from Whitman's journal entry dated April 16, 1861, in *The Solitary Singer* (New York: New York University Press, 1976), 272.
- 21 See also Farzan's comparison of Whitman to Rumi and Hafez for the "I-thou relationship, the microcosm-macrocosm duality to complete fusion and oneness" that "finds its most convenient and poetic expression in the love sex relationship between two people" (576).
- 22 Robert Roper, *Now the Drum of War: Walt Whitman and His Brothers in the Civil War* (New York: Walker and Company, 2008), 174.
- 23 Amy Parsons, "Desire, Forgetting, and the Future: Walt Whitman's Civil War," *Arizona Quarterly* 71 (2015), 85-109. See page 96.
- 24 Betsy Erkkila, *Whitman and the Political Poet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 23.
- 25 Roger Asselineau, *The Evolution of Walt Whitman* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999) [originally published Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1960], 155.
- 26 Ghulam M. Fayeze, "Images of the Divine in Rumi and Whitman," *Comparative Literature Studies* 17 (1980), 33-43. See page 33.
- 27 William Sloane Kennedy, "Notes on the Text of *Leaves of Grass*," *Conservator* 8 (1898), 184-185.
- 28 George Hutchinson, "Race and the Family Romance: Whitman's Civil War," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 20 (Winter/Spring 2003), 134-150. See page 139.
- 29 Horace Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden* 3:95. Available on the *Walt Whitman Archive*.
- 30 See Schueller's extended psychoanalytic reading, showing how "the idea of the mother—without agency, ever giving, located in the past—attracts Whitman the poet, for whom it is represented by Asia." For Whitman, argues Schueller, this "not only suggests regression but also becomes a means of naturalizing colonization" (184).
- 31 Horace Traubel, "Notes on the Text of *Leaves of Grass*," *Conservator* 9 (1898), 9-10.
- 32 Though attributed to Ferideddin Attar of Tun, the Persian source poem used for "Song of the Banner at Daybreak" was possibly written by an unknown author trying to pass himself off as the established poet, a rather common pattern in the classical verse tradition. The following is related to the author by Persian scholar Francis Lewis: "[Alger's poem] comes from what is quite likely a pseudo-Attar work called the Javaaher al-dhaat (Jowhar-e dhaat or Jowhar-naame) which has however circulated in Ferriddudin Attar-e-Tuni's name since at least the 15th century." A link to the extended narrative (which Alger has significantly condensed) can be found here: ganjoor.net/attar/jz/d1/sh27/.

- 33 John Baldock, *The Essence of Rumi* (London: Arcturus, 2005), 101.
- 34 Burton Hatlen, "'Song of the Banner at Daybreak' (1865)," *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland, 1998). Available on the *Walt Whitman Archive*.
- 35 Elena Furlanetto, "Walt Whitman's 'Sea Drift' Cluster: The Encounter of Sufi and American Selves at Paumanok," *Harbors, Flows, and Migrations: The USA in/and the World* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2017), 95-110. See page 96.
- 36 Arthur Ford, "The Rose-Gardens of the World: Near East Imagery in the Poetry of Walt Whitman," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 5 (Summer 1987), 12-20. See page 18.
- 37 Walt Whitman to William D. O'Connor, January 6, 1865. Available on the *Walt Whitman Archive*, ID: nyp.00196.
- 38 Elsa Barker, quoted in "Did Whitman Borrow From the Orientals," *Current Literature* 43 (August 1907), 165-166.