

NOTES

1 Henry A. Smith, ed. and trans., *Dark Soliloquy: The Selected Poems of Gertrud Kolmar* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 55. Unless otherwise indicated, all subsequent quotations of Kolmar's work are from this volume. For the order and organization of the poems, see Kolmar's complete collection, *Das Lyrische Werk* (München: Kosel-Verlag, 1960).

2 In a personal letter, November 25, 1988, Walter Grünzweig of the Institut für Amerikanistik in Graz, Austria, suggested that German poets who used Whitman in the 1930s may at times have found the accidental resemblances between Whitman's poetry and Nazi "Blut-und Boden" poetry an embarrassment. Kolmar's better-known cousin, Walter Benjamin, even dismissed Whitman-inspired Franz Werfel as an ultrareactionary. See Michael C. Eben, "Gertrud Kolmar: An Appraisal," *German Life and Letters* 37 (1984), 197; and *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 227ff. Wilma Brun Merlan discusses Werfel as a pure idealist who rejects the world in "Franz Werfel, Poet," *Franz Werfel 1890-1945*, ed. Lore B. Foltin (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1961), 26-38. The poetry she quotes suggests a Whitman following Emerson's advice and leaving out the body. At least one prose writer, Thomas Mann, seems to have successfully used Whitman against oppressive government; see Robert K. Martin, "Walt Whitman and Thomas Mann," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 4 (Summer 1986), 1-6.

3 I have modified Smith's translation to a more literal rendition which emphasizes the eroticism in Kolmar's word-play. For the original, see pp. 59-60.

4 Smith captures erotic undertones here, but I have modified his translation to demonstrate how Kolmar was employing lists in the manner of Whitman (see pp. 76-79).

5 In showing that most of Whitman's characteristic techniques of form are traceable to the King James Bible, Gay Wilson Allen, *The New Walt Whitman Handbook* (New York: New York University Press, 1986), remarks: "The structure of Hebraic poetry, even in English translation, is almost lacking in subordination" (p. 215). The form is suitable for a poetry that undermines tyranny.

6 Gertrud Kolmar, *Briefe an die Schwester Hilde* (München: Kosel-Verlag, 1970), 9-15. Especially see the letter dated November 24, 1938.

ON THE BACK COVER: WHITMAN AND WORCESTER

Devoted as Walt Whitman was to the study of "words," it is not surprising that there has come to light an example of his signature on the title page of an 1849 dictionary. Descendants of Thomas B. Harned, one of Whitman's three literary executors, had saved this page for the sake of the signature, but the rest of the book has been lost. Professor Joel Myerson of the University of South Carolina recently purchased this title page and other Whitman memorabilia, including several volumes of Whitman's works inscribed to Harned by the poet; the facsimile on the back cover appears courtesy of Professor Myerson.

The significance of Whitman's autograph on this particular title page is the implication that he owned and used this reprint of the 1846 edition of

Joseph Emerson Worcester's *Universal and Critical Dictionary of the English Language*. Worcester (1784-1865) was Noah Webster's former associate and chief rival in the mid-nineteenth century "War of the Dictionaries" (see H. L. Mencken, *The American Language*, one-volume abr. edit. with Raven I. McDavid, Jr. [New York: Knopf, 1974], p. 482).

Whitman had a good opinion of Worcester and found him preferable on several counts to Webster, whom he found lacking "a good ear" in his pronunciation notes. (See *Daybooks and Notebooks*, ed. William White [New York: New York University Press, 1978], 3:717-718.) Included among Whitman's manuscript notes on language is a review, dated May 1847, of Worcester's dictionary (*DBN*, 3:812). Also among Whitman's notes are a series of definitions and pronunciations of French words which he appears to have derived from Worcester. Several such citations, including "feu de joie," "feuillage," "feuille morte," "cuisine," and "eclaircissement," can be found among a "long list of words, possibly for an intended dictionary" (*DBN*, 3:814-825).

Based on a comparison of Whitman's manuscripts and Worcester's 1846 edition, the claim has been previously made (Michael Rowan Dressman, "Walt Whitman's Study of the English Language," diss. North Carolina, 1974, p. 192) that Whitman had this particular dictionary at hand when he made many of his language notes. The appearance of his signature on this title page tends to confirm that claim.

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