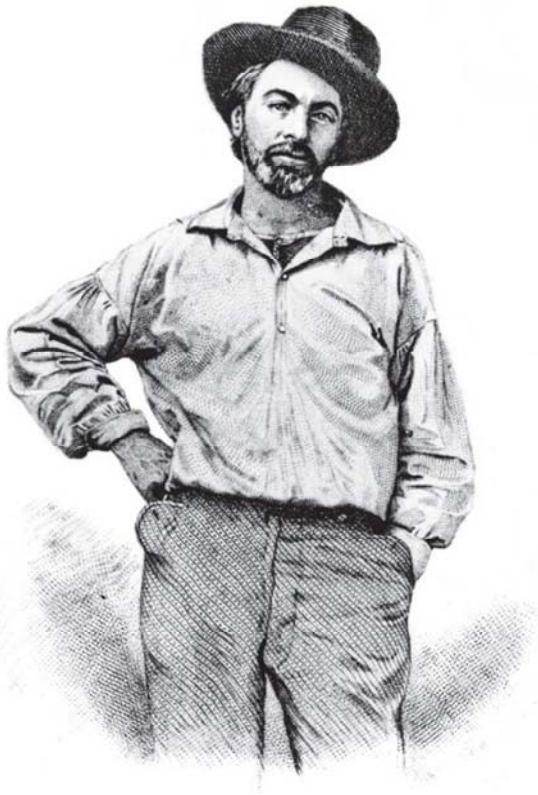

WALT WHITMAN
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Front Cover: Facsimile of the frontispiece of the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass* / Courtesy of the Special Collections Department, The University of Iowa Libraries.

"THE CENTRAL URGE IN EVERY ATOM": WHITMAN'S ATOMISM AND SCHELLING'S *NATURPHILOSOPHIE*

DAVID SOLLENBERGER

Walt Whitman's prominent and consistent use of the word "atom" from the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass* to the 1891-92 deathbed edition has prompted much debate about the sources and meanings of the term in his work. This interest in the concept is not surprising, given his fascination with the changing world of science, philosophy, and technology around him. Indeed, perhaps no scientific idea experienced more development in the 19th century than the atom. Atomic theory had its origins in Epicurean philosophy which viewed the material world as constructed from atoms and void, and this is probably where Whitman first encountered the word. Frances Wright's *A Few Days in Athens*, a novel that expounded Epicureanism, was an early favorite of the young Whitman, but the focus of the book was not Epicurus's philosophy of nature. Rather, it was a belated product of the Radical Enlightenment, a movement that found in Epicureanism an inspiration for critiquing established religion, clericalism, prejudice, and entrenched political and social roles and norms.[1]

At the dawn of the nineteenth-century, however, the atom was no longer an abstract concept argued about by philosophers—as it had been since the rediscovery of Lucretius's *On the Nature of Things* in the fifteenth-century—it was one of the most fruitful ideas in modern science. In 1811, the same year a sixteen-year-old Wright returned to Scotland and began spending her winters studying the ancient atomists, the Italian chemist Amedeo Avogadro published his hypothesis that "equal volumes of all gases in the same conditions of temperature and pressure contain the same number of molecules."[2] This discovery came at the beginning of a century of fruitful debate and discovery in chemistry

as new elements were named, atomic weights were determined, and practical applications of theory changed industry and agriculture. The terms "atom" and "molecule," however, remained ill-defined even among chemists, and it would not be until September of 1860, a few months after Whitman had completed the third edition of *Leaves of Grass*, that the greatest minds in chemistry would meet in Karlsruhe to sort out their precise meanings.[3]

Both the increasingly detailed scientific understanding of the atom and chemical processes more generally, as well as the ancient atomism of Epicurus and Lucretius undoubtedly contributed to Whitman's idea of the atom. Yet, I will argue that neither atomic theory fully captures the way Whitman uses the term in his poetry. The poet's ideas more closely mirror the *Naturphilosophie* of F. W. J. Schelling, a German philosopher who rejected the Enlightenment and Epicurean picture of atoms as "dead mechanism," was intimately familiar with the cutting edge of chemistry in his own time (though he would be viewed as too speculative and non-empirical by the next generation of chemists), and advanced his own view of nature as "active," "dynamic," and "autonomous."

1

Despite the advances made in chemistry in the decades before his birth, the world Whitman entered was still one of "natural philosophers and natural historians, and at a slightly less gentlemanly level, chemists, anatomists and instrument makers." Rather than "scientists," they were amateurs whose "childish curiosity continued into adulthood when solving problems and finding explanations could be a leisure activity, maybe sociable."[4] Yet science, especially chemistry, rapidly professionalized over the course the poet's life. In 1833 as he was learning the printing trade (itself being quickly revolutionized by new discoveries and technologies), the English polymath William Whewell coined the term scientist. By the time he was editor at the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* in the late 1840s, Whitman was reviewing the

writing of Justus von Liebig, head of the first PhD granting chemistry program in the world. The United States in Whitman's time, however, was a center of practical rather than theoretical science, natural history (biology, geology, anthropology) rather than natural philosophy (physics, chemistry, and astronomy). American science was best exemplified by the Lewis and Clark expedition into the newly acquired Louisiana territory and, during Whitman's time, the explorations of Charles Wilkes in the Pacific Ocean and the Pacific Railroad Surveys looking for a transcontinental railroad route. These surveys provided "wonderful opportunities for natural historians and geographers" not only as part of the expeditions themselves but also by providing descriptions, illustrations, and samples for colleagues back in the east.[5]

Theoretical chemistry remained a European, and primarily a German, English, and French discipline. Nevertheless, there was a part of the science that quickly gained an American audience, organic chemistry. Liebig's *Chemistry in its Application to Agriculture and Physiology* made such an impact on American scientific thinking that an article in *The North American Review* declared it had not only been "repeatedly issued in rival editions by respectable publishers" but also subsequently "transformed into a couple of almost illegible pamphlets, and widely scattered over the land in the form of 'cheap literature.'"[6] What inspired Americans' fascination was not the theoretical details of the work, but rather organic chemistry's ability to increase crop yields. Important developments in the scientific understanding of the atom, however, did not filter so easily into Whitman's favorite magazines. Rather, his atomism owes much to the *Naturphilosophie* of Schelling, a philosophy which took seriously experimental science's discoveries about the structure of matter but saw them as part of the larger problem of explaining nature's relationship to human subjectivity.

This becomes clear by looking at the only place that the word "scientist" appears in *Leaves of Grass*, Section 5 of "Passage to India." Written nearly forty years after Whewell coined the

term, Whitman begins with the observation that human beings wander unsatisfied, "yearning, curious, with restless explorations, / With questionings, baffled, formless, feverish, with never-happy/ hearts." The scientist appears and attempts to solve the problem of "separate Nature so unnatural," an "unloving earth, without a / throb to answer ours" a "Cold earth, the place of graves." Even with the successes of professionalized scientific research in the nineteenth century, the scientist's investigations are not enough:

After the seas are all cross'd, (as they seem already cross'd,)
After the great captains and engineers have accomplish'd their work,
After the noble inventors, after the scientists, the chemist,
the geologist, ethnologist,
Finally shall come the poet worthy that name,
The true son of God shall come singing his songs.

Only the poet can validate and bring meaning to the deeds of the voyagers, scientists, and inventors and sooth the hearts of the "fretted children" of Adam and Eve. This is because the poet, rather than the scientist, can link together "all these separations and gaps," and justify the "cold, impassive, voiceless earth." Once the poet has done his work,

Nature and Man shall be disjoin'd and diffused no more,
The true son of God shall absolutely fuse them. (*LG* 1891, 318-319)

For Whitman, the explanation of material nature given by science is useful, productive, and correct but ultimately creates a divide between persons and nature. It is the work of the poet to reconcile to the two by bringing forth nature's dignity and showing its inherent connection with the person.

Whitman was still thinking about this problem in the 1880s when he reflected on the death of Thomas Carlyle. The work of scientists, including their explorations into the nature of the atom, is part of "the most profound theme that can occupy the mind of man," that is, "the fusing explanation and tie" between

"the (radical, democratic) Me, the human identity of understanding, emotions, spirit, &c." and "the (conservative) Not Me, the whole of the material objective universe and laws, with what is behind them in time and space" (*PW* 258). This question is best addressed by Kant and the philosophers of German Idealism: Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. Whitman then declares allegiance to what he takes to be Hegel's answer, namely that "the whole earth . . . with its infinite variety, the past, the surroundings of to-day, or what may happen in the future, the contrarieties of material with spiritual, and of natural with artificial" constitute "necessary sides and unfoldings, different steps or links, in the endless process of Creative thought… which is held together by central and never broken unity" (*PW* 259).

Yet despite this paean to Hegel, the unity between the Me and Not Me throughout his work is found in the person, not "the endless process of Creative thought." The material world for Whitman is more than an external object to be observed and interacted with. In the form of the human body it is part of the person, and through the chemical processes of decomposition the body is born out of and returns to the cosmos. Yet Whitman also clearly holds the view that material nature and the spiritual are inescapably intertwined. This is manifest in a connection between body and the soul which is evident from the very first edition of *Leaves of Grass*. From the 1855 Preface forward, each time the soul is mentioned the body is close by. After all, he declares, "I am the poet of the body, / And I am the poet of the soul" (*LG* 1855, 26).

But the body is not merely a fleshy temple for the soul, rather, he says in "Starting from Paumanok," "Behold, the body includes and is the meaning, the main concern, and includes and is the soul" (*LG* 1891, 25). Or as he also puts it in "I Sing the Body Electric," "And if the body were not the soul, what is the soul?" (*LG* 1891, 81). The soul cannot be separated from the body for the simple reason that the material which makes it up is more than dead matter. "The spread" of the body, the "Shaded ledges and rests," the "rich blood," the brain and its

"occult convolutions" and the phallic "root of washed sweet-flag, timorous pond-snipe, nest of guarded duplicate eggs" are not divine merely because they are beautiful and functional. The soul is a part of the body, inscribed into its very materials. It is the place where the subjective Me comes to realize that the objective Not Me is a constituent part of itself because material nature, the very atoms that make up the body, are imbued with subjectivity.

Divinity is not bestowed upon matter when it becomes part of the person, it is always divine, as is clear from one of Whitman's most fascinating poems of material nature, "This Compost." He begins by recoiling in horror from nature, rather than being the place "where I thought I was safest," Whitman declares that he will "withdraw from the still woods I loved" as well as "the pastures to walk" and "will not strip the clothes from my body to meet my lover the sea." This horror comes from the realization that the ground is full of "distemper'd corpses" and "sour dead"; the poet wonders how the earth does not sicken with this knowledge. Yet he realizes that despite being full of corpses, life continually returns, "The grass of spring covers the prairies," beans, onions, apple-buds, and wheat are all "innocent and disdainful above all those / strata of sour dead." The poet can now safely return to nature and enjoy physical contact with it once again. While this might be interpreted as a poem of nineteenth-century organic chemistry, the final line points in a different direction. Out of "corruptions" and "infused fetor," the Earth "renews with such unwitting looks its prodigal, annual, sumptuous crops," and "gives such divine materials to men, and accepts such leavings from them at last" (*LG* 1891, 285-287).

The materials that nature gives to humans are themselves divine, a literal resurrection miracle. This notion, taken together with the idea that the spiritual and material are deeply interconnected, that the soul is the body, indicates a philosophy of nature gleaned through direct and indirect exposure to Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*. Well before he had read the extensive summary of Schelling's philosophy in Joseph Gostwick's

German Literature or directly encountered him in Frederic Henry Hedge's *Prose Writers of Germany*, the poet had already absorbed many of his ideas through Coleridge, Emerson, Carlyle and descriptions of German philosophy in literary magazines.[7] This is especially true of Schelling's ideas about the objective world of material nature and its relation to human subjectivity.

2

Despite his insistence that Hegel's philosophy was the most complete answer to the relationship between the Me and the Not Me, Whitman's ideas of material nature and its subjective qualities seem to have been formed by Schelling. Even the phrasing of the problem as fusing the "Me" and the "Not Me" mirrors several passages that appeared in Whitman's favorite literary magazines and points to Schelling, rather than Hegel as the proper philosopher to answer the question. The first, published in the July 1844 issue of *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, paraphrases Victor Cousin's analysis of German philosophy. The author says of Schelling: "in his opinion, philosophy must rise, at first, even to the absolute being, the *common substance*, and the *common ideal* of the *me*, *and the not me*, which does not relate exclusively either to the one or the other, but which comprehends them both, and forms their identity."[8] Similarly, in the January 1852 edition of *The American Whig Review*, an article on philosophy proclaims that the "Idealism of Kant" was developed subjectively by Fichte and objectively by Schelling, with the "two divergent lines" reunited in "the *Absolute Idealism* of Hegel." Yet in describing Schelling's philosophy the author says "Schelling, taking the *Absolute* as the last possible generalization, traced its unfolding in the *me* and the *not-me*." [9]

The importance of Schelling for Whitman's ideas of material nature goes beyond this similarity of phrasing. While Hegel and Schelling were friends at one point in their careers and interested in similar questions, the key difference between them is one of

great consequence for the poet's approach to the Not Me. As S. J. McGrath succinctly puts it,

> Schelling remains convinced, from his earliest treatises to his last lectures, that all intelligible structure, mental or material, physical or metaphysical, finite or divine, is characterized by polarity, opposition, and the creative and dynamic tension between incommensurables, a tension which must not be abrogated in a spurious logic that presumes to deny the principle of contradiction (Hegel's)… for Schelling, contradictories are never fused, and the opposition between them highlights the primacy of will over thought, for in the face of incommensurable options, thinking can go no further until the will *decides*. However, Schelling is not Kierkegaard: all polarities are undergirded by a concealed commonality, a deep ground of unity that makes the opposites possible, for only that which is in secret alliance, according to Schelling, can be truly opposed.[10]

The result is that, "Where Hegel was inclined to propound the completeness of the system even in the face of his own evident admission of its incompleteness, Schelling insisted that our very existence precludes the possibility of its systematic comprehension."[11] A true Hegelian could never so forthrightly declare, as Whitman does, "Do I contradict myself? / Very well then I contradict myself, / (I am large, I contain multitudes)" (*LG* 1891, 78).

The way Whitman thinks of the person as the meeting point between body and soul is one that fascinated Schelling in a similar way. As he puts it in *Bruno, or, On the Natural and Divine Principle of Things*,

> but inasmuch as a soul has the nature of the intrinsically and substantially infinite, while the body is finite (though infinitely finite and capable of depicting the entire universe), the individual entity that exists in time reveals the mystery hidden away in God—the absolute identity of the infinite, which is the pattern or foretype, and the finite, which is the antitype. And so the element in a thing that is responsible for the absolute union of soul and body, or of thought and being, will intrinsically convey the essence of the absolutely eternal, the indivisible identity wherein idea is also substance.[12]

For Schelling, neither soul nor body is "intrinsically real," they only exist in time through their mutual opposition to each other.[13] Whitman does not discuss the person quite in the same terms of the opposition between soul and body, but the poet and philosopher do share the idea that the reality of persons is only in the identity of body and soul.

This identity is possible because, as Schelling puts it in the Introduction to his Ideas for a *Philosophy of Nature*, "Nature should be Mind [*Geist*, also translatable as "spirit"] made visible, Mind [*Geist*] the invisible nature. Here then, in the absolute identity of Mind [*Geistes*] *in us* and Nature outside us, must be resolved."[14] Whitman would have encountered this idea in Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*[15] where he sums it up in his own prose by critiquing Descartes and his assertion of the "essential heterogeneity of the soul as intelligence, and the body as matter." Against this dualism, Coleridge asserts that

> since impenetrability is intelligible only as a mode of resistance; its admission places the essence of *matter* in an act or power which it possesses in common with *spirit*; and body and spirit are therefore no longer absolutely heterogeneous, but *may* without any *absurdity* be supposed to be different modes, or degrees in perfection, of a common substratum.[16]

The idea of "the essence of matter" as "an act or power" is one Coleridge developed both through his reading of Schelling, and, like the German philosopher, through study of the chemistry of his time.[17] As a young man he was acquainted with the chemist Joseph Priestly, the poet and botanist Erasmus Darwin, as well as the doctor and chemist Thomas Beddoes, through whom he met his greatest scientific influence, the chemist Humphrey Davy. Importantly for Coleridge, both Davy's chemistry and the *Naturphilosophie* of Schelling broke with the "Mechanico-corpuscular Philosophy" of "Anglo-French" science. As Trevor H. Levere explains, "in Coleridge's view" this approach to science "seemed symptomatic of 'the sunk condition of the world . . . given up to Atheism and Materialism. . . . All Science had become mechanical.'"[18] The philosophy of nature presented

by the great minds of the seventeenth-century, Descartes, Pierre Gassendi, Robert Boyle, and Isaac Newton, drawing inspiration from the rediscovery of Epicurean atomism, saw the smallest particles of nature as essentially passive.[19] In Coleridge's own time, he supported Davy against fellow English chemist John Dalton who he believed also held a view of mechanical and passive atoms.

Davy's chemistry excited Coleridge because, at the most basic level of nature, it avoided positing "a multitude of distinct and essentially passive corpuscles." As an alternative, his electrochemistry "indicated relations if not a fundamental identity between the natural forces of electricity, galvanism, and chemical affinity."[20] Davy's work thus built on the picture of chemistry Coleridge had first encountered in Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*. Schelling's "*dynamic atomism*" was not based on tiny corpuscles of matter, but rather "natural monads" that were "not themselves in space, that is, filling up space with their sphere of activity (defined by the counterbalance of attractive and repulsive forces)" but rather were "actants" or "action, whose effects and products are 'presentable in space.'"[21]

In a passage from his *Aides to Reflection*—a book Whitman reviewed in 1847, a few months before reviewing Liebig's *Chemistry in its Application to Agriculture and Physiology*—Coleridge demonstrates the "utter emptiness and unmeaningness of the vaunted Mechanico-corpuscular Philosophy" in an image Whitman must have appreciated:

> The germinal power of the Plant transmutes the fixed air and the elementary Base of Water into Grass or Leaves; and on these the Organific Principle in the Ox or the Elephant exercises an Alchemy still more stupendous. As the unseen Agency weaves its magic eddies, the foliage becomes indifferently the Bone and its Marrow, the pulpy Brain, or the solid Ivory. That what you see is blood, is flesh, is itself the work, or shall I say, the translucence, of the invisible Energy, which soon surrenders or abandons them to inferior Powers, (for there is no pause nor chasm in the activities of Nature) which repeat a similar metamorphosis according to their kind.[22]

While Whitman would not have had access to the technical arguments over whether atoms were physical or pure action, active or passive, passages like this show the way that Coleridge incorporated both Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* and Davy's lectures on the history and nature of chemistry to "add to his collection of metaphors.[23]

Coleridge's extensive use of Schelling was also important for Emerson, from whom his knowledge of the philosopher primarily came.[24] In "The American Scholar" he displays familiarity with both Schelling's idea of atoms as activity and the philosopher's insistence on the intimate connection between matter and spirit. Emerson declares that the

> great principle of Undulation in nature, that shows itself in the inspiring and expiring of the breath; in desire and satiety; in the ebb and flow of the sea; in day and night; in heat and cold; and, as yet more deeply ingrained in every atom and every fluid, is known to us under the name of Polarity,—these "fits of easy transmission and reflection," as Newton called them, are the law of nature because they are the law of spirit.[25]

By the time he wrote "The American Scholar," then, it is clear Emerson knew Schelling's "breathtaking all-inclusive proposal that 'nature is eternalized mind; mind is internalized nature.'" Indeed, "this radical and comprehensive connection between nature and mind is the unwobbling pivot, the fundamental condition of most of Emerson's work."[26] All of this flows from the idea that Schelling first announced in his early works of *Naturphilosophie* and returned to in the *System of Transcendental Idealism*—the work that Coleridge cribbed most extensively from in the *Biographia* and had such an influence on Emerson—that objective being or nature is "merely freedom suspended."[27] If this is true, then it follows that, in a line that Whitman would have appreciated, "every plant is a symbol of intelligence."[28]

Carlyle, especially his *Sartor Resartus* which Whitman reviewed in 1846, should also be mentioned here with Coleridge and Emerson as an important way into Schelling. While the book deals less directly with Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* than Coleridge and Emerson do, it does draw on its themes to create, among other things "a complete

inversion of the reflective scientific treatises that flourished around 1830."[29] In the chapter "Natural Supernaturalism," Carlyle, through the character Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, is clear in his critique of those who see "the Machine of the Universe" as "fixed to move by unalterable rules." Certainly nature does move by rules, but it "remains of quite *infinite* depth, of quite infinite expansion; and all Experience thereof limits itself to some few computed centuries and measured square-miles."[30] In its rejection of both the view of nature as mechanism and his acknowledgment that "the Other (the 'NOT-ME', *Nicht-Ich*)" as "something more than a 'spectre', neither a ghostly double of the philosophizing Ich or the raw material ready to be negated in the process of coming-to-self-consciousness," Teufelsdröckh's account of nature is quite Schellingean.[31]

What Whitman had direct access to of Schelling's writing was an edited version of "On the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature," a speech given in 1807 and available in Frederic Henry Hedge's *Prose Writers of Germany*.[32] In the speech, Schelling combines a critique of mechanistic explanations of the material world with admonitions to the artist. Any artist who sees nature as "nothing more than the lifeless aggregate of an indeterminable crowd of objects, or the space in which, as in a vessel, he imagines things placed" will remain uninspired in his work. On the other hand, the great artist or "inspired seeker" understands nature as "the holy, ever-creative original energy of the world, which generates and busily evolves all things out of itself."[33] Whitman probably did not read this address until the mid 1860s, yet, as we have already seen, he would have been familiar with the philosopher's argument against viewing material nature as "dead," "passive," and/or "mechanical." As Robert J. Scholnick points out, the poet affirms Shelling's assumption "that nature reaches its high point in human consciousness" and the result is that "'Song of Myself,' then, takes its place within a Romantic tradition of return, recovery and reintegration, but as a belated American vision."[34]

According to Schelling, when we understand that "matter is indeed nothing else but mind viewed in an equilibrium of its activities," this "leads to far more elevated notions of the nature and dignity of matter than any others."[35] The problem with the emerging scientific atomism

of the nineteenth-century and that of the Epicureans is that they advance us "not a step thereby towards [matter's] true nature, since the atoms themselves are just matter."[36] While Whitman would retain the idea of atoms as existing in physical space, rather than Schelling's actants, his rejection of "dead" matter leads him to think about them quite differently than an Epicurean or a nineteenth-century chemist like Liebig.

3

This understanding of atoms as imbued with subjectivity, mind, or a spiritual quality is clear and consistent throughout Whitman's uses of "atom" across all editions of *Leaves of Grass*. The most well-known comes in the opening to "Song of Myself," first written in 1855, and remains unchanged in subsequent editions: "every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you." This is quickly followed in the 1891-92 edition with the declaration that, "My tongue, every atom of my blood, form'd from this soil, this air, / Born here of parents born here from parents the same, and their parents the same," (*LG* 1891, 29). Originally this line appeared in the 1860 "Proto-Leaf" and remained part of the poem when it was renamed "Starting from Paumanok" for the 1867 edition. In 1881, it was moved to its familiar place in "Song of Myself," reinforcing the material body uniting with the spiritual soul in the celebration of the self. It is appropriate that an invocation of atoms comes directly after an invitation to the soul because Whitman makes clear, the body is the soul. In the 1891-92 version of the poem, the democratic notion that "every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you" is immediately connected with the sexuality and rootedness in place of the idea that "every atom of my blood" was "formed from this soil, this air" and a long line of ancestors.

The second instance of atom from the 1855 edition appears in what would become Section 8 of "Song of Myself" and is perhaps Whitman's most obscure. While all other instances of "atom," aside from the one in "A Persian Lesson," are found

in multiple editions of *Leaves of Grass*, this one was deleted in the 1856 version and never returned in subsequent editions. The 1891-92 edition retains almost all of this passage, removing only the line, "The souls moving along . . . . are they invisible while the least atom of the stones is visible?" (*LG* 1855, 18). Whatever Whitman's reason for removing it from later editions, it remains an important theoretical statement that helps to clarify his atomism. The entire passage juxtaposes the life of persons in the city—"the driver with his interrogating thumb," "the carnival of sleighs," "the clinking and shouted jokes and pelts of snowballs," "the hurrahs of popular favorites," "the fury of roused mobs," "the sick man," "the meeting of enemies," "the policeman working his passage to the center of the crowd"—with the materials they interact with, especially the echoes they make while tramping on the pavement. In the 1855 version of the poem, the impassive stones not only send and receive the many echoes of human noise, but are intimately connected with them, "The souls moving along . . . . are they invisible while the least atom of the stones is visible?" For Mark Noble, "the catalog seems to aver that the visibility of 'stones' somehow implies the visibility of 'souls'—that the 'least atom' of insensate reality somehow founds and delivers sensate experience."[37] Read from the perspective of Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*, however, reality is not "insensate," and the move from material reality to "sensate experience" is less mysterious. As he explains in "On the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature," the artist's view of nature will determine the product of their art. Though Whitman had probably not read the address before he wrote this line in 1855, he nevertheless had clearly picked up on Schelling's idea that the artist who "fancies that Nature is altogether dead" will fail to "be successful in that profound process (analogous to the chemical) whence proceeds, purified as if by fire, the pure gold of Beauty and Truth."[38]

The addition of the "Drum Taps" poems in 1867 accounts for the next three instances, the most important of which are found in "Pensive on Her Dead Gazing" where the "Mother

of All" implores the earth, streams, airs, essences and soils of growth, mountainsides, and trees, to absorb the "torn bodies" of the war dead. She charges them to "lose not my sons, lose not an atom." Nature is to hold the bodies of the war dead "in trust for me faithfully" and "Exhale me them centuries hence, breathe me their breath, let not / an atom be lost," (*LG* 1891, 377). The poem has a clear connection with "This Compost," but rather than being horrified by nature chemically recycling so many dead bodies, only to be relieved by the miracle at the end, Whitman is not disgusted by these corpses of the war dead. Once again, as with the use of "atom" in "Song of Myself," the idea of place and matter is key. Nature is to absorb the atoms, of these bodies and release them "centuries hence," thus connecting future persons to past sacrifice in a literal, physical way. Here too Whitman emphasizes the subjective, spiritual quality of atoms by invoking the "breath," the pneuma, of the dead. Just as Whitman's tongue and blood were formed of atoms from a specific soil (that of Long Island, where the Whitman and Van Velsor families went back generations), so the atoms of the war dead would continue to have an effect on the battlefields ages hence both as matter and spirit. The other instance of atom is more conventional, meaning only the smallest possible piece of a larger whole, and comes in a line from "Song of the Banner at Daybreak." Here Whitman as the "Banner" in the Song describes, "The Continent, devoting the whole identity without reserving an atom" (*LG* 1891, 227).

The final use of atom, first published in *Goodbye My Fancy* in 1891 and only included in the deathbed edition, occurs in the poem "A Persian Lesson." In it, the teaching of the "greybeard sufi" is a rather generic mystical lesson that "Allah is all, all, all—is immanent in every life and object." This message is followed, however, by a statement that would be quite familiar to a reader of Schelling,

> It is the central urge in every atom,
> (Often unconscious, often evil, downfallen,)

To return to its divine source and origin, however distant,
Latent the same in subject and in object, without one exception.
(*LG* 1891, 419)

Written after Whitman had read and ruminated directly on German Idealist philosophy in Gostwick and Hedge's books, this poem shows the clearest influence of Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*. The first hint of this is the use of the word "unconscious," a concept that Schelling developed throughout his career and which remains one of his enduring philosophical legacies. While the exact formulation of the unconscious changes throughout Schelling's works, the version Whitman seems to be referring to here is the early one in which the "dark ground" of nature is still the "self-equilibrating cosmos of the nature-philosophy."[39] The "central urge" of the atom, even though it is conflicted, is "to return to its divine source and origin, however distant." Notice too that this "often unconscious" urge is the same for both subject and object, and though Whitman leaves this unsaid, it is the same because the person is the way that nature achieves its highest goal "through the last and highest order of reflection… what we call reason, whereby nature first completely returns into herself, and by which it becomes apparent that nature is identical from the first with what we recognize in ourselves as the intelligent and the conscious."[40] The atom here is more than a small bit of matter, it is the smallest piece of objective nature that still yearns for a return to the absolute.

4

There are, of course, other plausible sources of Whitman's atomism. As discussed above, the earliest and most important was Epicureanism, which he was introduced to in Frances Wright's *A Few Days in Athens*. He described the book to Horace Traubel "as daily food to me: I kept it about me for years. It is young, flowery, yet has attributes all its own."[41] Wright herself was quite young when she wrote the it, the product of cold Scottish winters spent studying philosophy in the University of Glasgow library.[42]

Readers have characterized it as a "utopian tract,"[43] one of the sources of Whitman's "metaphysical naturalism" from which he "learned the Epicurean principle that 'the what is unknowable,'"[44] and a "defense of Epicureanism and the pleasure principle, which was based on the materialist philosophy of Jeremy Bentham."[45] The book, however, is less a treatise on Epicurean philosophy, which is primarily reserved for a final chapter speech by Epicurus, and more a melodrama involving grand philosophical confrontations between Epicureans and Stoics, impassioned fainting, and a dramatic rescue from a raging river.[46] Perhaps Whitman read the book as much for these aspects as he did for its philosophy; outside of the final speech by Epicurus it reads much like other romantic novels he enjoyed.[47]

Despite its overwrought plot of a young man, Theon, discovering Epicureanism to be exactly the opposite of what he was told, the book was probably young Whitman's first exposure to atomism. Epicurus' female student Leontium—a character Wright modeled on herself[48]—tells Theon that it is "only the different disposition of these eternal and unchangeable atoms that produces all the varieties in the substances constituting the great material whole, of which we form a part."[49] Of particular interest is Leontium's explication of the conclusions to be drawn from the idea that

> those particles, whose peculiar agglomeration or arrangement, we call a vegetable to-day, pass into, and form part of, an animal to-morrow; and that animal again, by the falling asunder of its constituent atoms, and the different approximation and agglomeration of the same,—or, of the same with other atoms,—is transformed into some other substance presenting a new assemblage of qualities.[50]

Wright was the first and most important place that Whitman encountered this Epicurean doctrine, and though he probably could not have read Lucretius before 1865, reading the Roman poet would have reinforced this view of nature. Lucretius, like Wright, makes clear that,

> Things seem to perish, then, but they do not:
> nature builds one from another, and lets no thing
> be born unless another helps by dying.[51]

Yet the problem with Epicurean atoms, as Schelling and Coleridge argued, is that they are not dynamic. They may combine into many different forms, but they remain "passive, stone-like entities possessing only shape, size and solidity;" they are "totally permanent and changeless." The only motion they are capable of is "motion in the void." This motion and "the impacts to which it could give rise" are "the only source of activity in nature."[52] Whitman's atoms are much more "active" than this.

An important implication of the permanence and changelessness is that "atoms of the sort from which a world might come to be or by which it might be made are not exhausted [in the production] of one world or any finite number of them, neither worlds like this one nor worlds unlike them. Consequently, there is no obstacle to the unlimitedness of worlds."[53] Wright puts this lesson in the mouth of her Epicurus quite clearly in *A Few Days in Athens*,[54] and it is also one of the most memorable teachings of Lucretius' On the Nature of Things.[55] For the Epicurean then, "our particular limited cosmos is only one of an infinite number of *cosmoi* (the plural of *cosmos*), each of which comes into existence and will eventually fall apart. But the universe as a whole has no beginning and no end, it has always existed and will always exist. And spatially, the universe stretches infinitely in all directions."[56] Nature may be unlimited, but it "has no creative power beyond that enacted blindly by the atoms themselves." Yet these atoms are passive, they "do not deliberate or make decisions, not only because they are inanimate and without any mental properties, but also because they have no need to: arrangements emerge spontaneously from a limitless set of attempts which end with the realization of viable stable structures."[57]

Compare this with the aim of the Alexander von Humboldt's *Cosmos*, another important inlet of Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*

into Whitman's views on nature, and a book so deeply influential that the poet retained the German spelling of "kosmos" throughout his poetry:

> . . . that we may hope to comprehend and describe the *universal all* (τὸ πᾶν) in a manner worthy of the dignity of the word *Cosmos* in its signification of *universe, order of the world*, and *adornment* of this universal order. May the immeasurable diversity of the phenomena which crowd into the picture of nature in no way detract from that harmonious impression of rest and unity which is the ultimate object of every literary or purely artistical composition.[58]

Humboldt's idea of the cosmos as ordered and harmonious even in its diversity not only differs from that of the Epicureans, but also draws on Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*. Much like Coleridge, early in his career Humboldt viewed Schelling as an alternative to philosophers who had nothing but a "mechanical" and "atomistic" method of explaining the world.[59] In *Cosmos*, written when his attitude toward Schelling had cooled, his opposition to the Enlightenment and Epicurean view of atoms as passive corpuscles of matter still draws from *Naturphilosophie*; Humboldt's order of nature is an active one. His goal of being able to "generalize our ideas by concentrating them in one common focus" will lead to "a point of view from which all the organisms and forces of nature may be seen as one living, active whole, animated by one sole impulse."[60] Humboldt acknowledges his debt to Schelling by quoting from "On the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature," the speech Whitman had access to in Hedge's *Prose Writers of Germany*: "Nature . . . is not an inert mass; and to him who can comprehend her vast sublimity, she reveals herself as the creative force of the universe—before all time, eternal, ever active, she calls to life all things, whether perishable or imperishable."[61]

Whitman certainly has moments where he sounds like an Epicurean, such as in Section 2 of "Starting from Paumanok," where he says "This then is life, / Here is what has come to the surface after so many throes and convulsions" (*LG* 1891, 19). Yet despite this peon to randomness, he cannot fully reconcile an

Epicurean physics with his commitment to "personalism," that "there is, in sanest hours, a consciousness, a thought that rises, independent, lifted out from all else, calm, like the stars, shining eternal." This is the idea "of identity—yours for you, whoever you are, as mine for me. Miracle of miracles, beyond statement, most spiritual and vaguest of earth's dreams, yet hardest basic fact, and only entrance to all facts." Thus, in these most "devout hours," "the significant wonders of heaven and earth," are only significant "because of the Me in the centre" (*PW* 394). Yet this "Me in the centre" is not the soul or mind floating ethereally above it all. After all, in preparation for the body of each person, "the globe lay preparing quintillions of years without one animal or plant, / For it the revolving cycles truly and steadily roll'd" (*LG* 1891, 85). How could it be any other way when "The whole theory of the universe is directed unerringly to one single individual—namely to You" (*LG* 1891, 273). Persons are certainly physically made up of atoms, but this only explains them partially. For Whitman, all of material nature as well as the ages and precedents of the past have been building toward the birth of each person. In the final consideration, this means that the material world cannot be the product of random atomic collisions. Whitman recognizes this as a problem for Epicureanism and explains in a notebook entry from 1866 that while Lucretius and Epicurus expound "reason.—the reason why—the how—practical—materialistic" this expounding "seems to confound spiritualism with superstition & credulity" (*NUPM* 1888). Schelling, and through his influence, Humboldt, Coleridge, Carlyle, Emerson, and Whitman oppose this this view of material nature as purposeless and inert, devoid of subjectivity. To view matter this way, as "dead" is to miss not only the miracles of the objective world, but to diminish the body and the person as well.

5

A second plausible source of Whitman's atomism is the rapidly changing understanding of nineteenth-century chemistry.

The rediscovery of Epicurean atomism had been an important impetus for natural philosophers like Giordano Bruno, Galileo Galillei, Pierre Gassendi, Robert Boyle, and Isaac Newton to question the dominant Aristotelian view of the material world as form and substance. By the 19th century, the concept of the atom had become less heretical but no less controversial. Indeed, "it experienced many vicissitudes in its painstaking accumulation of empirical data, which oftentimes suffered from the imperfection of research tools and the difficult maturation of theoretical concepts (for example, the distinction between atoms and molecules)." The main debates of Whitman's time centered not only on the atom/molecule distinction but also "the determination of a scale of atomic weights, the significance of 'equivalents,' the development of a chemical notation, the classification of elements (which culminated in the period table), and many other perhaps narrower but nonetheless important issues."[62]

While, as discussed above, Whitman would have had little access to the details of these developments, he did review to one of the era's most important books of the practical application of chemistry, Justus von Liebig's *Chemistry in its Application to Agriculture and Physiology*. In the review, he praises Liebig's insights into "the essences of creation, and the changes, and the growths, and formations and decays of so large a constituent part of the earth, and the things thereof."[63] Mark Noble argues that Whitman's reading Liebig allowed him

> the chance to reimagine not only the kinds of experience subjects qua matter might discover and the kind of adhesive connections they might form to one another; it also means the chance to reimagine and relocate the spiritual power of subjectivity immanently within the material… in other words, I see Whitman as practicing his chemistry as a kind of high-stakes alchemy—a special chemistry of embodied presence in which persons reduce to matter and matter converts to spirit.[64]

Clearly, as we have already seen, the poet was fascinated with the deep incarnation of the spiritual in the physical, but the scientific chemist Liebig would seem to be a strange place for

him to discover this. A series of notebook entries that date from around the same time as his review of Liebig presents the problem quite clearly. In one, the poet states that, "Different objects which decay, and by the chemistry of nature, their bodies are into spears of grass" (*NUPM* 57). This sentiment is one that he could have gotten from Liebig's work or from Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* which he read around the same time, or his prior reading of Wright's *A Few Days in Athens*. This entry, however, is followed soon after by a rumination on material nature that represents the opposite approach to chemistry than that of Liebig. Whitman states,

> The soul or spirit transmutes itself into all matter—into rocks, and can live the life of a rock—into the sea, and can feel itself the sea—into the oak, or other tree—into an animal, and feel itself a horse, a fish, or a bird—into the earth—into the motions of the suns and stars—. (*NUPM* 57)

Certainly there is a "high-stakes alchemy—a special chemistry of embodied presence in which persons reduce to matter and matter converts to spirit," but this is not the empirical chemistry of Liebig. Rather it is much closer to the *Naturphilosophie* of Schelling.

Indeed, had Liebig wanted to use this language, he very well could have. He was quite familiar with Schelling's ideas of nature and had even attended the philosopher's lectures in Erlangen. His opinion, however, was that "Schelling possessed no thorough knowledge in the province of natural science, and the dressing up of natural phenomena with analogies and in images, which was called exposition, did not suit me."[65] In fact, Liebig was the leading voice of a generation in the German-speaking world that rejected *Naturphilosophie*. He complained that "there was not a single chemical laboratory" in Prussia and "too much emphasis was placed instead upon literary and philosophical studies, including that 'false Goddess and 'Black Death,' *Naturphilosophie*."[66] Yet despite these protestations against Romantic science and accusations of materialism from

the Catholic Church, Liebig himself "made a distinction between organic chemistry and organized chemistry":

> Whereas organic chemicals outside a living vegetable or animal environment obeyed the same rules as their inorganic counterparts, as did molecules undergoing fermentation or putrefaction, inside living systems they were under the control of a vital force.[67]

Only a vital force could explain "the forms characteristic of a living system," and yet, this was not "experimental science but a position as metaphysical as the reductionist aspirations of his critics."[68] According to Liebig, there exists a chemical cycle that connects living organisms with inorganic nature, but because of his rejection of Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*, he was forced to resort to the idea of a "life force" in order to explain the difference between the two.

For Schelling, at least in the earlier *Naturphilosophie* that was so influential on Coleridge, Carlyle, Emerson, and myriad other Romantics,

> every finite organism is related to every other upon which it to some degree depends such that nature itself must be regarded as a self-enclosed whole, an organism in its own right, a being which is the cause and effect of itself. Such organization is not explicable physically or mechanistically; only the hypothesis of a single principle of life explains it.[69]

The mechanist-vitalist dichotomy and its separation of the inorganic from the organic is overcome "by understanding the universe itself as a living whole, an unconscious subject which intends the anorganic as the condition of the possibility of the organic."[70] Whitman may not have been privy to most of Schelling's works, but he certainly understood this principle of nature quite early in his poetry. As he wrote in 1855 version of what would become "I Sing the Body Electric," left unchanged, except for the removal of the ellipses, throughout all subsequent editions, "As I see my soul reflected in nature . . . . as I see through a mist one with inexpressible completeness and beauty . . . ." (*LG* 1855, 80). Or as he put it in the 1856 "Poem of The Road" (later

"Song of the Open Road") and also left unchanged:

> The earth never tires!
> The earth is rude, silent, incomprehensible at first—nature is rude and incomprehensible at first,
> Be not discouraged—keep on—there are divine things, well enveloped,
> I swear to you there are divine things more beautiful than words can tell! (*LG* 1856, 231)

Whitman's atomism and his vision of material transformation certainly drew on sources like the Epicureanism of *A Few Days in Athens* and the cutting-edge organic chemistry of Liebig, but his discussion of the subjectivity, mind, or spiritual quality of material nature also points to Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* as a deep influence. Even though he states it most clearly later in his career after becoming more directly familiar with German Idealism, the theme of the intimate connection between the Me and Not Me is present even in his pre-*Leaves of Grass* writings. In his 1852 novel *The Life and Adventures of Jack Engle*, Whitman muses about the connection between the human being, material nature, and place as he looks on "the tombs of a father and mother, natives of New York, with a numerous family of their children." The whole family, despite the difference in "the periods of their dying" and roaming to distant places "had all been brought here at last… and were there mouldering, but together." What strikes the narrator about the graves is not so much the chemical processes of decomposition and fertilization, but rather that

> [h]uman souls are as the dove, which went forth from the ark, and wandered far, and would repose herself at last on no spot save that whence she started. To what purpose has nature given men this instinct to die where they were born? Exists there some subtle sympathy between the thousand mental and physical essences which make up a human being, and the sources where from they are derived?[71]

Any description of material nature that wants to include persons in its purview must take this "subtle sympathy" into account.

Atoms are far more than passive imperceptible bodies that lie at the foundation of nature and give matter its sensual qualities. Rather, they are the active, living source of objective nature, a realm that human beings are deeply intertwined with through their very bodies. For Whitman, as for Schelling, nothing that makes up so wonderous a creature could ever be, at bottom, inert mechanism.

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NOTES

1 Here I follow Jonathan Israel's formulation of "Radical Enlightenment" as developed in Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). A shorter account contrasting it with a more moderate Enlightenment can be found in Jonathan Israel, *A Revolution of the Mind: Radical Enlightenment and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 27–28.

2 Quoted in Bernard Pullman, *The Atom in the History of Human Thought,* trans. Axel R. Reisinger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 202.

3 Avogadro exclusively used the term "molecule," distinguishing between "elementary molecules"— "atoms" in modern parlance—and "compound or integral molecules," or what are today called simply "molecules." John Dalton, Avogadro's English contemporary, on the other hand, exclusively used the term "atom" and thought of them as "the smallest particle of a substance that still preserves the properties characteristic of that substance." He therefore "spoke of atoms as single, double, triple, and so on" which in modern terms "would correspond to elements, binary compounds, ternary compounds, etc." See Pullman, 201.

4 David Knight, T*he Making of Modern Science: Science, Technology, Medicine and Modernity: 1789-1917* (Malden: Polity, 2009), viii.

5 Knight, 146–147.

6 "The Chemistry of Vegetation," *The North American Review* (January 1845), 157.

7 Floyd Stovall, *The Foreground of Leaves of Grass* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1974), 170.

8 "Spirit and Tendencies of the New School of Philosophy," *The*

United States Magazine and Democratic Review (July 1844), 26.

9 W.L.C., "Philosophy," *The American Whig Review* (January 1852), 70.

10 S. J. McGrath, *The Dark Ground of Spirit: Schelling and the Unconscious* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 2.

11 David Walsh, *The Modern Philosophical Revolution: The Luminosity of Existence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 131.

12 F. W. J. Schelling, *Bruno, or, On the Natural and the Divine Principle of Things*, trans. Michael G. Vater (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 178–179.

13 Schelling, *Bruno*, 180.

14 F. W. J. Schelling, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Errol E. Harris and Peter Heath (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 46.

15 Coleridge is an especially important early link between Whitman and Schelling. The poet reviewed Coleridge's *Aides to Reflection* and *Biographia Literaria* favorably for the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* in 1847 (see, Walt Whitman, *The Journalism: Volume II: 1846-1848*, Ed. Douglas A. Noverr, Edward J. Recchia, and Herbert Bergmann (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2003) 245, 372–3.). *Biographia Literaria* is an especially important text for Whitman's exposure to Schelling's ideas of nature. In the *Biographia*, Coleridge drew heavily from Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism* without acknowledgment, leading to accusations of plagiarism. G. N. G. Orsini characterizes Coleridge as an enthusiastic follower of Schelling, "expounding his philosophy brilliantly and cogently, translating and paraphrasing him in excellent English prose, and then on one side attempting an apologia of Anglicanism grounded on transcendental idealism, and on the other carrying out speculation of his own on the lines of the *Naturphilosophie*." G. N. G. Orsini, *Coleridge and German Idealism: A Study in the History of Philosophy with Unpublished Materials from Coleridge's Manuscripts* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), 220.

16 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, vol. 1 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1907), 88.

17 Many nineteenth- and twentieth-century critics tended to see Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* as overly speculative, abstract, and unempirical. This criticism is unfair, and in fact, as Michela Massimi shows, "the speculative, obscure Schelling" clearly took "a stance in favor of the new Lavoisierians in recognising the central role of oxygen in defining the phenomena of combustion" a cutting edge position in chemistry against the still popular phlogiston. Michela

Massimi, "Philosophy and the Chemical Revolution after Kant" in *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism*, ed. Karl Ameriks, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 199.

18 Trevor H. Levere, "Coleridge, Chemistry, and the Philosophy of Nature," *Studies in Romanticism* 16 (1977), 358.

19 For an account of the debate around corpuscularianism, its relationship with Epicurean atomism, and mechanical philosophy which Coleridge is here opposing, see Antonio Clericuzio, *Elements, Principles and Corpuscles: A Study of Atomism and Chemistry in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Springer, 2000). Particularly of interest is the account of Robert Boyle's corpuscular philosophy in Chapter 4.

20 Levere, "Coleridge, Chemistry, and the Philosophy of Nature," 357–358.

21 Massimi, "Philosophy and the Chemical Revolution after Kant," 189.

22 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Aids to Reflection*, ed. John Beer, vol. 9 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 398.

23 Eric G. Wilson, "Coleridge and Science," in *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Frederick Burwick (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 643.

24 Stanley M. Vogel, *German Literary Influences on the American Transcendentalists* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 107. For the deep connection between Emerson and Coleridge, see Samantha C. Harvey, Transatlantic Transcendentalism: Coleridge, Emerson, and Nature (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), especially Chapter 3, "Nature: Philosophy and the 'Riddle of the World.'"

25 Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Emerson: Essays and Lectures* (New York: Library of America, 1983), 62.

26 Robert D. Richardson, Jr., "Emerson and Nature," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Joel Porte and Saundra Morris (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 102.

27 F. W. J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, trans. Peter L. Heath (University of Virginia Press, 1993), 33.

28 Schelling, *System*, 122.

29 James A. Secord, *Visions of Science: Books and Readers at the Dawn of the Victorian Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 205.

30 Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, ed. Kerry McSweeney and Peter Sabor (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 194–195.

31 Giles Whiteley, *Schelling's Reception in Nineteenth-Century British Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 83–84.

32 Whitman's notes and writings on German philosophy show a deep familiarity with two books, Joseph Gostwick's *German Literature* published in 1849 and Frederic Henry Hedge's *Prose Writers of Germany*, first published in 1848, though probably not read by Whitman until the 1860s. Hedge, a Unitarian minister who had attended gymnasia in Göttingen and Illfeld at a time when almost no Americans studied German philosophy, was one of the early transcendentalists and one of the most important conduits for German philosophy into America. Along with Schelling, Hedge's anthology presented introductions, translations, and editorial selections of works form Luther, Boehme, Abraham a Santa Clara, Kant, Lessing, Mendelssohn, Hamann, Wieland, Musäus, Matthais Claudius, Lavater, Jacobi, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Fichte, Richter, the Schlegel brothers, Schleiermacher, Hegel, Zschokke, Novalis, Tieck, Hoffman, and Chamisso. See Philip F. Gura, *American Transcendentalism: A History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2008), 29.

33 F. W. J. Schelling, "On the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature," in *Prose Writers of Germany*, ed. Frederic Henry Hedge; trans. J. Elliot Cabot (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1849), 510.

34 Robert J. Scholnick, "'The Original Eye': Whitman, Schelling and the Return to Origins," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 11 (1994), 187.

35 Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, 92.

36 Schelling, *System*, 92.

37 Mark Noble, *American Poetic Materialism from Whitman to Stevens* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 59.

38 Schelling, "On the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature," 511.

39 Whitman still seems closest to the *Naturphilosophie* here, but his comment on the unconscious being "often evil, downfallen" does begin to sound like the later Schelling. As S. J. McGrath puts it, "The early Schellingian unconscious, developed in the nature-philosophy and the identity-philosophy, is impersonal and immanent. It is not yet the dark side of God unveiled in the Freedom essay, not the underside of the personality of the Stuttgart Seminars, not the doorway into the spirit-word of Clara; rather, the early Schellingian unconscious is the collective intelligence running through all of matter, and insofar as we too are material, running through us as well. It is the spirit in nature, or better, the spirit of nature, nature spiritualized and given subjectivity, but of an impersonal quality, like the subjectivity of a plant or an irrational animal. In the Boehme-influenced middle works, beginning

with the 1809 Freedom essay, Schelling's thought takes a decisive turn towards transcendence, and at the same time, towards the personal. The early notion of nature as the dynamic polarized matrix of being is not abandoned but qualified. For the later Schelling, nature is no longer the one and the all, rather, de-centered from the place of prominence once granted it, nature becomes the dark ground of spirit, its whole raison d'être focused in its precarious teleologico-volitional subordination to the personal." See McGrath, *The Dark Ground of Spirit*, 82.

40 Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, 6.

41 Horace Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, vol. 2 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1908), 445.

42 Celia Morris Eckhardt, *Fanny Wright: Rebel in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 16.

43 Justin Kaplan, *Walt Whitman: A Life* (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2003), 57.

44 Harold Bloom, *The Anatomy of Influence: Literature as a Way of Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 326.

45 Betsy Erkkila, *Whitman: The Political Poet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 17.

46 For example, a typical line of prose reads, "Cleanthes laid a hand on his laboring breast: he made one violent effort for composure and speech: it failed. The hot blood forsook his cheeks: it rushed again: again it fled: he gasped, and dropped fainting at the feet of his master." Frances Wright, *A Few Days in Athens; Being the Translation of a Greek Manuscript Discovered in Herculaneum* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 70.

47 For instance, the novels of George Sand and Bernhard S. Ingemann. See Jerome Loving, *Walt Whitman: The Song of Himself* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 161–163.

48 Eckhardt, *Fanny Wright: Rebel in America*, 17.

49 Wright, *A Few Days in Athens*, 177–178.

50 Wright, *A Few Days in Athens*, 178.

51 Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, trans. Frank O. Copley (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011), 7.

52 Alan Chalmers, *The Scientist's Atom and the Philosopher's Stone: How Science Succeeded and Philosophy Failed to Gain Knowledge of Atoms* (New York: Springer, 2009), 76.

53 Epicurus, *The Epicurus Reader: Selected Writings and Testimonia*, Trans. Lloyd P. Gerson and Brad Inwood (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1994), 8.

54 "I see around me in the world I inhabit an infinite variety in the arrangement of matter;—a multitude of sentient beings, possessing different kinds, and varying grades of power and intelligence,—from the worm that crawls in the dust, to the eagle that soars to the sun, and man who marks to the sun its course. It is possible, it is moreover probable, that, in the worlds which I see not,—the boundless infinitude and eternal duration of matter, beings may exist of every countless variety, and varying grades of intelligence, inferior and superior to our own, until we descend to a minimum, and rise to a maximum, to which the range of our observation affords no parallel, and of which our senses are inadequate to the conception." Wright, *A Few Days in Athens,* 165.

55 "For surely not by planning did prime bodies / find rank and place, nor by intelligence, / nor did they regulate movement by sworn pact, / but myriad atoms sped such myriad ways / from the All forever, pounded, pushed, propelled, / by weight of their own launched and speeding along, / joining all possible ways, trying all forms, / whatever their meeting in congress could create; / and thus it happens that, widespread down the ages, / attempting junctures and movements of all kinds, / they at last formed patterns which, when joined together, / became at once the origin of great things, / earth, sea, and sky, and life in all forms." Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, 122.

56 Tim O'Keefe, *Epicureanism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 42.

57 Pierre-Marie Morel, "Epicurean Atomism" in *The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism*. Ed. James Warren (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 79.

58 Alexander von Humboldt, *Cosmos: A Sketch of the Physical Description of the Universe*, Trans. E. C. Otté, vol. 1 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 79.

59 Michael Dettelbach, "Alexander von Humboldt Between Enlightenment and Romanticism" *Northeastern Naturalist* 8 [Special Issue] 1 (2001), 19.

60 Humboldt, *Cosmos*, 1:55.

61 Schelling, "On the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature," quoted in Humboldt.

62 Pullman, *The Atom in the History of Human Thought*, 193–194.

63 Whitman, *Journalism*, 2:288.

64 Mark Noble, "Whitman's Atom and the Crisis of Materiality in the Early Leaves of Grass," *American Literature* 81 (June 2009), 254.

65 Justus von Liebig, "An Autobiographical Sketch" in Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, Showing the Operations, Expenditures, and Condition of the Institution to July, 1891, trans. J. Campbell Brown (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1893) 262.

66 William H. Brock, *Justus von Liebig: The Chemical Gatekeeper* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 67. Liebig went on to say that, "From this product of obdurate presumption and ignorance no progress for the science [of chemistry] is to be expected; with what haste, with what concupiscence they grasp onto the false Goddess of German Naturphilosophie with its straw-stuffed and rouge-painted dead skeleton. It promises them light, without troubling them to open their eyes; it gives them results without observation or experiment, and without acquainting them with nature and form, purpose and activity, which one wants to explain, with life-force, dynamic, specific, with loud, and in their mouths, senseless words, which they do not understand, the explain experience, which they likewise do not understand. The life-force of Naturphilosophie is the horror vacui, the Spiritus rector of ignorance." Justus von Liebig, "Der Zustand der Chemie in Preussen,"Annalen 34 (1840), 97-136; translation adapted from E. Patrick Munday III, *Sturm und Dung* (Ph. D. dissertation, 1990), 175; quoted in Brock, 68.

67 Brock, *Justus von Liebig*, 310.

68 Brock, 310–311.

69 McGrath, *The Dark Ground of Spirit*, 88.

70 McGrath, 88.

71 Walt Whitman, *Life and Adventures of Jack Engle: An Auto-Biography; A Story of New York at the Present Time in which the Reader Will Find Some Familiar Character* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2017), 120.

GREAT AUDIENCES "ABSORB, ADOPT IT": WALT WHITMAN'S "THE OLD BOWERY"

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"These actor people," Walt Whitman confided to Horace Traubel, "always make themselves at home with me and always make me easily at home with them. I feel rather close to them—very close—almost like one of their kind."[1] For Whitman, actors were "a noble set" who had "always entered keenly into his 'emotionality and affection'"; he felt late in life that he "should esteem it a great triumph to have a clientele among the actors" (*WWWC,* 5:325). He claimed to have learned some of his own skills of verbal utterance from actors: "My custom was, in the old days, to listen sharply to the pronunciation, accent of the actors—then to standby that—to stick to it—*absorb, adopt it*" (*WWWC,* 8:58, emphasis added). He was the ideal audience for these performers: engaged, attentive, admiring—and perpetuating—their performances with his own voice, as when he famously would recite Shakespeare in stagecoaches. Later, he would emulate the actors with his pen, anticipating a great audience of poetic readers who would perpetuate him.

Whitman's pen *is* his voice—and so, too, are those of his audiences, in the vein of David Nowell Smith's articulation that "poems' soundworlds are constructed out of voice as material or medium; poems display, or stage, or generate, a 'speaking voice,' or speaking voices, as we readers, silently or aloud, are invited to 'voice' a poem."[2] Whitman expects his reader to go beyond simply repeating his words. Rather, he "stages" dialogic interactions that invite responsive written utterance. I aim to show that he does so in the model of the theatre culture of his youth, enacted by him poetically in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" (1859), as described at this essay's conclusion, and then recalled in prose in his reminiscence, "The Old Bowery" (1888), the primary focus of this essay. Readers, who are Whitman's "Poets to Come" (1860), are expected to "absorb, adopt" Whitman's

words, to answer the questions asked within the poems, and then to respond—that is, to originate and voice new poems. I call this cycle Whitman's *perpetuative utterance*, a death-transcending communion within the poetic medium that stands, as revealed by historical poetics, in direct opposition to the sort of solipsistic lyric navel-gazing of much Romantic and later poetry. Whitman's poems, nearly to a text, invite the reader's participation: his is, overall, an oeuvre of the anti-lyric. His poetry is not an indirect, overheard address to the reader but a non-lyric, *direct* address to and dialogic engagement *with* the reader.[3] Yopie Prins has suggested that part of what we might achieve via historical poetics is to ascertain "how reading poems might connect us with other minds."[4] This mental link is exactly what Whitman seems to want with his own readers, whom he approaches in part with dialogic techniques common to the antebellum theatres of New York, especially the working-class Bowery Theatre of the 1830s and '40s.

What I will show to be Whitman's poetically theatrical "audience seats" are described, albeit not in a theatrical context, by Vincent J. Bertolini as "projected space[s] within which the reader's subjective agency would be introjected within Walt Whitman's poems."[5] But introjected by what, or whom? By the poem itself? If the reader's agency is introjected within the poems, then his or her response would be unconscious, and the reader would lose his or her agency. This is exactly the opposite of what Whitman wants. Poetically, he looks always for heightened consciousness on the reader's part—for increased alertness, responsiveness, and responsibility. Whitman also and always remains within the poem as an active partner—that is, as the actor playing to an audience; he "stops some where waiting" for the reader, after all. Bertolini asserts, "Whitman imagines the transformative power of lyric reading as resulting from a displacement of the speaker by a newly powerful, embodied reader. The speaker imagines himself as having 'become invisible' and addresses a 'you, compact, visible, realizing my poems, seeking me'" (1053). It's true that the reader "realizes" the poems and "seeks" the speaker, but herein lie multiple misreadings as well. First, by mistaking the dialogic register here for "lyric reading," Bertolini discounts the power of the

poetic conversation and of the reader's responsive utterance.[6] Further, by pointing to the speaker as "invisible," Bertolini indicates that the speaker has somehow disappeared, to be replaced—"displaced"—by the reader. But, "invisibility" in Whitman does not necessarily mean disappearance or displacement. For him, the invisible and the visible are simply different, coexisting planes of existence ("the unseen is proved by the seen/ Till that becomes unseen, and receives proof in its turn"). It is not that the reader displaces the speaker but that the reader *shares space with*—is in dialogue with—the speaker. The speaker-actor is still there, "listening," as the reader-audience "answers" the poem's questions.[7]

Whitman's contemporary reviewers recognized his indebtedness to theatre culture, especially as represented by the Bowery as it existed when Whitman, a youth living on his own in Brooklyn, frequented the theatre. Starting with the famous frontispiece portrait that introduced the Whitmanian persona in the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* (1855), Whitman clothed the various iterations of his book in markers of Bowery culture that set the persona among the roughs rather than the rarified. A reviewer of Whitman's first edition directly aligned the poet with the Bowery: "Walt is indeed 'one of the roughs;' for his picture would answer equally well for a 'Bowery boy."[8] To label someone as a Bowery type signaled a way of life, a certain kind of swagger for which the Bowery Theatre metonymically represented the neighborhood. In Joann Krieg's words, "The 'Bowery b'hoys,' a city phenomena, were visible on the streets of New York as well as on its theater stages, so that one image fed into the other, erasing the line between them."[9] The Bowery and its denizens weren't entirely reviled; as one reviewer noted in 1867, "with the extravagance, coarseness, and general 'loudness' of Bowery boys, Mr. Whitman possesses in an unusual degree their better traits": boisterous good spirits, camaraderie, energy. It is from this Bowery—"the days of my greatest theatrical application," he said (*WWWC,* 3:432), and the days when there was "no doubt the old actors played to the pit, not the upper part of the house" (*WWWC*, 8:58-59) —that Whitman poetically drew his theatrical influences. His poetry repeats the dialogic, participatory dynamics of this antebellum theatre, especially in his replication of

the give and take between performer and audience, and their mutual dependence.

As Whitman recalled in "The Old Bowery," a late-in-life essay once described as a "theatrical efflorescence," he "always scann'd an audience as rigidly as a play." Both actors and audiences took the play-script itself to be merely a starting point for an evening's entertainment. Audiences were accustomed to playing integral and sometimes disorderly roles in their entertainment, and dialogue between performer and audience was a vital part of the experience, making the theatre an inventive and imaginative place for audiences as well as actors. As Alan Ackerman reports in his excellent study of nineteenth-century literature as "portable theatre," "few people would have gone to the theatre had they not felt that they would be able to participate in some way in the process of performance and, therefore, in a sense, in the process of creation." Ackerman identifies five constitutive features of this American theatre: a written play-text, a human voice or utterance, a gestural body, mise-en-scene, and an audience. But, he acknowledges that even if we enforce these requirements in categorizing performances, ultimately theatre is not a space so much as a set of conditions (xiv–xv). This distinction, which allows him to classify various nineteenth-century prose works, including some of Whitman's prose, as "portable theater," also allows us to consider Whitman's poetry as such. Ackerman, who in a chapter on Whitman richly describes Whitman's attraction to and immersion in the theatre throughout his life, as well as his development of actorly personae and poetic techniques, does not address the regular exchanges between actors and audiences in the antebellum theatre, or the importance of audience participation to Whitman's poetics. It is these essential exchanges that predict the author : actor :: reader : audience dialogics of Whitman's poetry.

In "The Old Bowery," Whitman characterizes this as a truly golden age of American theatre expressly because of the essential roles of both actors and audiences, when "both players and auditors were of a character and like we shall never see again" (1192). He waxed nostalgic about the audience responses, "there never were audiences that paid a good actor or an interesting play the compliment of more

sustain'd attention or quicker rapport" than those at the Bowery (1190). Whitman's description of the Old Bowery crowds sounds not unlike one of his poetic catalogs:

> Not but what there was more or less rankness in the crowd even then. For types of sectional New York those days—the streets East of the Bowery, that intersect Division, Grand, and up to Third Avenue—types that never found their Dickens, or Hogarth, or Balzac, and have pass'd away unportraitured—the young ship-builders, cartmen, butchers, firemen (the old-time "soap-lock" or exaggerated "Mose" or "Sikesey," of Chanfrau's plays,) they, too, were always to be seen in these audiences, racy of the East River and the Dry Dock. Slang, wit, occasional shirt sleeves, and a picturesque freedom of looks and manners, with a rude good-nature and restless movement, were generally noticeable…. Then at times came the exceptionally decorous and intellectual congregations I have hinted at; for the Bowery really furnish'd plays and players you could get nowhere else. (1190)

With the "rank," "rude," "good-nature[d]," and "restless" young "ship-builders, cartmen, butchers, firemen" of the crowd elbow-to-elbow with the "exceptionally decorous and intellectual congregations," the Bowery was truly eclectic, electric, and egalitarian (at least for white men). The Bowery thus modeled for Whitman an ideal democratic nation that "allowed for the illusion at least of a kind of union or community but also of a sense in the theater (and not just on the stage) of the potential for public action" (Ackerman, 34). Whitman recalls:

> the occasion of either [Edwin] Forrest or Booth, any good night at the old Bowery, pack'd from ceiling to pit with its audience mainly of alert, well dress'd, full-blooded young and middle-aged men, the best average of American-born mechanics—the emotional nature of the whole mass arous'd by the power and magnetism of as mighty mimes as ever trod the stage—*the whole crowded auditorium, and what seeth'd in it, and flush'd from its faces and eyes, to me as much a part of the show as any*—bursting forth in one of those long-kept-up tempests of hand-clapping peculiar to the Bowery—no dainty kid-glove business, but electric force and muscle from perhaps 2000 full-sinew'd men—(the inimitable and chromatic tempest of one of those ovations to Edwin Forrest, welcoming him back after an absence, comes up to me this moment—Such sounds and scenes as here resumed will surely afford to many old New Yorkers some fruitful recollections. (1189-1190, emphasis added)

"The Old Bowery" gives the audience, "as much a part of the show as any," far more attention than the plays themselves, which get almost no attention, or even the actors, who receive a great deal of attention—especially Junius Brutus Booth, discussed below—but still nowhere near as much as the audience. Whitman builds the same theatrical flexibility that he describes in "The Old Bowery," the space for the reader-audience's responsive, perpetuative utterance, into his poetry itself.

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In his exhaustive classic study of Whitman and theatre, Floyd Stovall states somewhat regretfully that "it is difficult to point out specific examples" of Whitman's affinity for the theatre in *Leaves of Grass*. In fact, however, such examples are embedded in the very spirit and structure of his poems, and in his prose as well. As David S. Reynolds points out in his essential *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography* (1995), which nicely traces Whitman's biographical involvement with the theatre, Whitman's "interest in audience-performer intimacy explains his attraction to performers who crossed the boundary between themselves and their listeners" (58). Two of the performers best known for crossing this boundary were "the elder Booth" Junius Brutus, Whitman's avowed favorite and a subject of much reflection in "The Old Bowery," and Edwin Forrest, probably the most famous actor of his era. Whitman admits that his experience as an audience member the night he saw Forrest perform "affected [him] for weeks" and, ultimately, for life: "I might say," he adds, that this brief exposure to Forrest as a performer "permanently filter'd into my whole nature" (1188). This "filter[ing]" of Forrest's nature into his own parallels Whitman's poetic promise to "filter and fibre the blood" of his readers; he seems to see his poetic performances as penetrating the very beings of his readers in the same way that the antebellum theatrical performances entered into his own. These penetrations into the receiving audience-reader—perhaps the "merge" that so many critics have tried and failed to fully capture, and certainly part of perpetuative utterance—are the impetus in "Cradle," as discussed below, for the creative birth of the "thousand songs . . . thousand warbling echoes"

that "started to life within" the new poet, after the boy receives into himself the love bird's sad songs.

Whitman's sense in 1888 was that "for the elderly New Yorker of to-day, perhaps, nothing were more likely to start up memories of his early manhood than the mention of the Bowery and the elder Booth" (1186). Later, while discussing this favorite with Traubel, Whitman anxiously regretted not being even more forceful about his admiration for the actor in his earlier reminiscences: "I attach a great deal of importance to Booth: . . . I may not have elaborated sufficiently in *November Boughs*: I in fact have felt things about Booth which I have not set down there or anywhere: he had much to do with shaping me in those earlier years" (*WWWC*, 4:286). Booth, Whitman reports in "The Old Bowery,"

> stood out "himself alone" in many respects beyond any of his kind on record, and with effects and ways that broke through all rules and all traditions. He has been well describ'd as an actor whose instant and tremendous concentration of passion in his delineations overwhelm'd his audience, and wrought into it such enthusiasm that it partook of the fever of inspiration surging through his own veins. (1187-1188)

Why were Booth's audiences so "overwhelm'd" by his performances and brought to a point where they "partook of the fever of inspiration surging through his own veins"? For Whitman, part of the answer was Booth's singular magnetic genius: he had his "own electric personal idiosyncrasy. (As in all art-utterance it was the subtle and powerful something *special to the individual* that really conquer'd)" (1192, emphasis in original). But Whitman also saw there was more to Booth's effectiveness than simply personal magnetism. Whitman reports that Booth was uniquely powerful because he performed "with effects and ways that broke through all rules and all traditions." His stage techniques, in other words, were revolutionary and radical—just as Whitman's poetic techniques would be two decades later. What precisely did these techniques consist of? For Whitman, one in particular stood out—and it reappears in his poetry.

Whitman just "happen'd to see what has been reckon'd by experts one of the most marvelous pieces of histrionism ever known. It must

have been about 1834 or '35." He tells the story as if reliving the scene in his mind, as if—like his poetry—it still exists in the present tense:

> After a one-act farce over, as contrast and prelude, the curtain rising for the tragedy, I can, from my good seat in the pit, pretty well front, see again Booth's quiet entrance from the side, as, with head bent, he slowly and in silence, (amid the tempest of boisterous hand-clapping,) walks down the stage to the footlights with that peculiar and abstracted gesture, musingly kicking his sword, which he holds off from him by its sash. (1191)

The crowd, as they say, goes wild, with a "tempest of boisterous hand-clapping." Whitman recalls that "fifty years have pass'd since then," but the memory pulls him back and he returns to the present tense, where he "can hear the clank, and feel *the perfect following hush* of perhaps three thousand people waiting" (1191). This "hush"—in contradistinction to the previous boisterous applause—most distinguished Booth as not just an actor of his time but, in Whitman's estimation, as one for the ages. Whitman continues:

> (*I never saw an actor who could make more of the said hush or wait, and hold the audience in an indescribable, half-delicious, half-irritating suspense.*) And so throughout the entire play, all parts, voice, atmosphere, magnetism, from 'Now is the winter of our discontent,'to the closing death fight with Richmond, were of the finest and grandest…. the great spell cast upon the mass of hearers came from Booth…. A shudder went through every nervous system in the audience; it certainly did through mine. (1191, emphasis added)

To the average twenty-first century reader, most of this passage would seem clear: Whitman admires the actors, their voices, the theatrical atmosphere, the dramatic sense. Even "magnetism," which Whitman lists as equal to the "parts, voice, and atmosphere," would still make sense in this context (although for Whitman, it almost certainly also referred to a mesmeric sort of magnetism). But what does Whitman mean when he says here that Booth "could make more [than any other actor] of the said hush or wait"?

What Whitman here calls the "hush or wait" was more commonly known to antebellum theatre-goers as the "point," a theatrical technique eagerly watched for by antebellum audiences and "so called to indicate the 'stops' or pauses indicated by marks of punctuation, such

as the period, comma, semi-colon, colon, etc."[22] On the antebellum stage, "points" became "translations" of written punctuation into performed emphases—that is, "moments when a pause heightened the meaning or emotional impact of a spoken passage" (6). Whitman was much struck as an audience member by these points—so struck, in fact, that he ultimately reproduced them in his own poetry and, in so doing, also reproduced both the actorly assertion of power seen in the point simultaneously with the dialogic conventions of the antebellum theatre. Whitman wants us to talk back—but, sometimes, he also wants us to "hush," perhaps as the boy in "Cradle" hushes himself in order to hear the love-birds sing.

As Whitman's memories of Booth indicate, the point—or even just the anticipation of it by an alert audience—could heighten dramatic suspense and increase the entertainment value of any performance. Whitman remembered not only Booth but also his contemporary actor Barrymore as a master of the hush or point: "at one point the fellow stands—says, 'What's that?': the effect was fine: I think it was Barrymore himself: the hush: oh! so few actors realize the power of silence, pause, surprise! and here was a demonstration" (*WWWC,* 1:465). One goal of this "silence, pause, surprise!" was, not surprisingly, to provoke the sort of adulation that audiences gave to those performances that become the stuff of legend—performances that might breathlessly be described by an audience member years later as "one of the most marvelous pieces of histrionism ever known." This effect, Julia Walker tells us, was

> the explicit goal of every actor who sought to create innovative 'points.' … Their reward was the immediate applause of an appreciative audience who obliged them to step out of character in order to accept their thanks…. *The 'point' marked the extent to which actors commanded interpretive agency over the texts they performed.* (14, emphasis added)

For the actors, points were as much about power as they were about entertainment—power over text, audience, and other actors, who were obliged to pause in their delivery both for the point itself, the tension of the extended quiet hush, and for the auditory juxtaposition of the subsequent applause.

Even in his old age, Whitman continued to clearly remember the effects of these hushes or points—even if he no longer remembered (or didn't realize he remembered!) the exact words referring to them. Traubel tells us that Whitman, when discussing slang "among the theatrical people, the actors," lost the sign but kept the sense of significance occasioned by a well-placed hush: "He half remembered one of their words—'a very common often used word.' His memory wouldn't work. 'I knew it well: it was a word signifying a hit, a take, a fetch—as when an actor *had made a point*, was applauded, brought down the house, as we say'" (*WWWC*, 4:96-97, emphasis added). Whitman, seemingly unaware that he's doing it, actually uses the term in question when he recalls that an actor "had made a point." We see, too, in this example his recounting of the same phenomena of actorly control—and audience reverence—as in his other descriptions of the hush or pause. In addition to giving actors agency—they could adjust the language of the playtexts as well as their own deliveries of the words to try to create more and longer points and, thus, garner more "stage time"—points also gave *audiences* a means to exercise control over a performance. A well-placed "boo" or "hiss" during a point, for instance, could disrupt the actor's delivery and dissolve any tension she or he was trying to build. Similarly, the extended "hush" the Bowery audience allowed Booth meant that this audience respectfully and admiringly ceded its cherished "right" to talk back, if only momentarily.[23]

To translate this theatrical technique to his poetry, which benefits from neither a spoken voice nor silence per se, and to help to create his perpetuative utterance, Whitman uses punctuation and spacing—visual cues—to indicate where points, or meaningful pauses, occur. In addition to emphasizing "what has just been said," his points stress what is to come. We know, because of his reading of Booth, that in his prose Whitman calls the "point" the "hush." He uses this term in his poetry as well. Shortly after the explicitly theatrical line "the actor and actress… those through with their parts and those waiting to commence," this passage appears: "Every condition promulges not only itself … it promulges what grows after and out of itself … / And the dark hush promulges as much as any. / They are but parts, any

thing is but a part" (*LG* 1855, 73). With the evocative and unusual verb "promulge," he tells us that his "dark hush" is something that "publishes" or "teaches." In other words, the hush provides lessons about "what grows after and out of itself." What are these lessons that we can find in Whitman's hushes, or points? What can we find growing "after" and "out of" them? And, where are these points in his poetry?

Conveniently, one such point is located in these very lines. Whitman here uses a theatrical metaphor, the idea of "parts" or roles, to point us to a theatrical poetic strategy. By placing ellipses after the phrase "every condition promulges not only itself … ," he creates a "point" that gives the reader "thinking space" and invites the reader to ponder (and appreciate?) the previous line. The reader might ask, "*what does [every condition] promulge in addition to itself?*" After the elliptic point, the speaker offers an explanation: "it promulges what grows after and out of itself." That is, every condition promulges—teaches—both its product and its progeny. After another elliptic point, the speaker comes to his "aha!" moment: the revelation that the "dark hush promulges as much as any." That is, the "point"—the seemingly empty space—is as meaningful as anything else: it, too, promulges its product and progeny. In Whitman's poetry, then, the empty spaces can carry as much meaning as the lines of text.[24]

While not every series of ellipses in Whitman's poems marks a point, many do, and they serve multiple functions. The point can allow a term (in this case, "moving") to remain undetermined for a moment until the speaker further defines it. This, in turn, allows the speaker to subvert the reader's assumptions and expectations: "In me the caresser of life wherever moving . . . . backward as well as forewards sluing" (*LG* 1855, 14). Because life generally isn't perceived as moving "backward" (even if "time avails not"), the ellipses prepare the reader for other subverted expectations. The point can also mark the contrast between when the speaker merely describes an object versus when he admires one: "The young fellow drives the express wagon . . . . I love him though I do not know him" (*LG* 1855,17). It can show the speaker's frenzy—he is out of control, unable to rein himself in with traditional punctuation: "I talk wildly . . . . I have lost my

wits . . . ." (*LG* 1855, 39). It can indicate the speaker's fluid and continual physical or psychic movement, as in a vision: "I skirt the sierras . . . . my palms cover continents" (*LG* 1855, 44).

With the poetic point, then, Whitman can be an actor who uses the "hush" to heighten the tension of his performance, but Whitman does more with the point than emphasize his own voice or agency. Walker acknowledges that by giving interpretive agency to actors, the point redirected audience attention away from playwrights and toward actors, a transference that marked "the moment of the actor's ascent" in nineteenth-century theatre history (19). But, points also affected audience reactions to performances, in part by giving audiences a new way to show appreciation or engagement—that is, with silence rather than with noise. Just as the theatrical point gave power to antebellum audiences, the poetic point allows Whitman's reader a certain amount of agency. It can provide "poetic time" for the reader to puzzle out a difficult line: "Have you worked so hard to get at the meaning of poems?" (*LG* 1855, 2). Perhaps before she or he reads the second half of this next poetic statement, the reader has come to an understanding of what it means to be "integral" with the speaker: "I am integral with you . . . . I too am of one phase and of all phases" (*LG* 1855, 28). It can allow the reader opportunity to digest a term ("satisfied"), perhaps recalling the speaker's other uses of the same term, before seeing it demonstrated: "I am satisfied . . . . I see, dance, laugh, sing" (*LG* 1855, 4). It can give the reader time to follow an instruction: "Undrape . . . . you are not guilty to me, nor stale nor discarded" (*LG* 1855, 9). It can stoke the reader's imagination, sometimes to heighten sexual tension: "Dash me with amorous wet . . . . I can repay you" (*LG* 1855, 28).

Whitman's poetic point thus encourages the reader to participate by actively listening, "pausing," and thus considering what she or he has read; Whitman recalled that as an actor "Booth always drew the best hearers," and he wanted the same (1187). But the point is, well, only the starting point for Whitman's theatrical poetics, which also construct poetic sites for reader response that enable a poet-reader exchange. Literally, Whitman makes poetic room for the reader to reply. These poetic sites are akin to the open spaces actors knew audi-

ences would fill with sound or, as we have seen with the point or hush, with silence, in the antebellum theatre. Throughout *Leaves of Grass, w*hen "you" refers to the reader, there's nearly always a space for the reader's reaction at the end of the line or stanza. The speaker and reader do not crowd each other out. Whitman's poetry is replete with questions—question after question after question—many of which are followed by blank spaces, which we can consider the audience's seats of his poems. From these seats, the reader-audience can shout back to the speaker-actor.[25]

To demonstrate Whitman's interrogative, dialogic theatrical poetry more clearly, I want briefly to walk through the 1855 edition.[26] It contains 79 total "interrogatives," by which I mean individual questions as well as series of related, adjacent questions within one stanza. Each of the following is a single interrogative: "Who need be afraid of the merge?" (*LG* 1855, 9) counts as one, just as the following lines count together as one: "Do you take it I would astonish? / Does the daylight astonish? or the early redstart twittering through the woods? / Do I astonish more than they?" (*LG* 1855, 24). The last three lines count as one interrogative because they're not interrupted by a declarative statement. However, if two questions within one stanza are separated by a declarative statement, they each count as a separate interrogative.[27] Fifty-four of the 79 interrogatives—the clear majority, that is—are open-ended questions, or *open interrogatives*. Open space—room for reader response—appears after each of them in the form of a traditional stanza break. These questions demand things from the reader, but, like the antebellum theatre, they also give the reader-audience *agency*. Open interrogatives can be divided into categories. Some open interrogatives apostrophize non-sentient objects: "Earth! You seem to look for something at my hands, / Say old topknot! what do you want?" (*LG* 1855, 61–62), while those directed toward the reader vary wildly in tone and content. Many seem casual, conversational, asking the reader to examine his or her memory to recall personal history or acquired knowledge: "Did you read in the seabooks of the oldfashioned frigate-fight? / Did you learn who won by the light of the moon and stars?" (*LG* 1855, 55). Others prod the reader a bit more insistently, asking him or her to provide an opinion on a controversial but also,

usually, intimate topic. In this case, for instance, what does the reader imagine comes after death?: "What do you think has become of the young and old men? / And what do you think has become of the women and children?" (*LG* 1855, 7). The open interrogatives venture even further into the reader's personal space by asking probing questions about private matters: "Your mother . . . . is she living? . . . . Have you been much with her? and has she been much with you? / Do you not see that these are exactly the same to all in all nations and times all over the earth?" (*LG* 1855, 130). Or, to return more demandingly and intrusively to the topic of death: "Have you guessed you yourself would not continue? Have you dreaded those earth-beetles? / Have you feared the future would be nothing to you?" (*LG* 1855, 99).

As if the forced intimacy of these very personal questions were not enough, other open interrogatives actually insult the reader. They reveal a suspicious and ornery speaker who suspects the worst: "Do you know so much that you call the slave or the dullface ignorant?/ Do you suppose you have a right to a good sight . . . . And he or she has no right to a sight?" (*LG* 1855, 128). Why does this speaker openly mocks his reader, when he desperately seeks union and dialogue? It seems here as if he batters the reader, in an attempt to wrangle a response out of him or her.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, many open interrogatives seek to prove that the speaker-reader connection is real. The speaker wants to know that he and the reader are, essentially, a team: "Will you speak before I am gone? Will you prove already too late?" (*LG* 1855, 82). He continually reinforces his common humanity with the reader—and he continually acknowledges the reader, "you," as audience: "What is a man anyhow? What am I? and what are you?" (*LG* 1855, 25). Finally, he continually reminds the reader that they share the same (textual) space: "Will the whole come back then? / Can each see the signs of the best by a look in the lookingglass? Is there Nothing greater or more? / Does all sit there with you and here with me?" (*LG* 1855, 91).

In the decades following his first publications of *Leaves of Grass* in 1855 and 1856, Whitman moved beyond subtly building participation into his poetry and began to actually *explain* his dialogic strategies in

addition to employing them. He expects "the main things" from his reader: "I am a man who, sauntering along, without fully stopping, turns a casual look upon you, and then averts his face, / Leaving it to you to prove and define it, / Expecting the main things from you" ("Poets to Come," 1860). He is openly foisting poetic responsibility onto the reader. With the publication of *Democratic Vistas* (1871), he clarifies what this rather aggressive charge to the reader means: "For know you not, dear, earnest reader, that the people of our land may all read and write, and may all possess the right to vote—and yet *the main things* may be entirely lacking?" (*Complete* 932, emphasis added). He suggests in 1871 that the primary absence—the main thing, that is, that's prevented America from achieving its greatness—is its inadequate national *literature*. His words on this count are worth quoting at length:

> Our fundamental want to-day in the United States, with closest, amplest reference to present conditions, and to the future, is of *a class, and the clear idea of a class, of native authors, literatures*, far different, far higher in grade than any yet known, sacerdotal, modern, fit to cope with our occasions, lands, permeating the whole mass of American mentality, taste, belief, breathing into it a new breath of life, giving it decision, *affecting politics far more than the popular universal suffrage, with results inside and underneath the elections of Presidents or Congresses*—radiating, begetting appropriate teachers, schools, manners, and, as its grandest result, accomplishing (what neither the schools nor the churches and their clergy have hitherto accomplish'd, and without which this nation will no more stand, permanently, soundly, than a house will stand without its substratum), a religious and moral character beneath the political and productive and intellectual bases of the States. (*Complete* 932, emphases added)

A national literature should be America's foundation ("substratum"). Literature itself *means* and *matters*, all on its own, without needing reference to politics. An "adequate" and "permeating" national literature would be diffuse: it would reach people inside of their heads and, he might even say with one of his favorite words, inside of their souls.[28] And this is why he needed to create the new generation of Poets to Come.

The dialogic practices of Whitman's beloved antebellum theatre had not survived even into the 1850s when Whitman first published *Leaves of Grass*, much less into the 1870s when he wrote *Democratic*

Vistas, but his poems could reproduce them. His dialogic dyad of speaker-actor and reader-audience would allow his (and, importantly, others'—his readers') literature to move beyond the individual to the collective. Poets in America thus would be the unacknowledged legislators of the world, with their texts reaching and shaping the people, including the acknowledged legislators, by penetrating their interiorities. The great (moral) poem would create the great (moral) reader-audience who would then become the great (moral) poet-citizen—perhaps even the great (moral) president—or Prostitute, in Whitman's paratactically arranged catalogic universe. Within the parameters of his own poetic theories of the moral Whitmanian "universe" (the single poem that is made up of the diverse—perhaps the diverse reader-poets who will perpetuate him?), Whitman's main responsibility is to help produce these future poets.

In one of the most passionate exhortations in all biographical accounts of Whitman's conversations, he tells Horace Traubel:

> "When you get in such a talk again, Horace, give out these ideas, give them as from me—authoritatively—let your note be heard. *For here is the kernel—this is the seat of the explanation: the tremendousest let-fly in this, our history here, perhaps in all literature. Understand me, I mean that men shall proceed in all they do out of a knowledge of life—as great actors act, orators speak, singers sing*—as in Alboni's voice, perhaps the greatest singer ever breathed—as in Booth—the old Booth—I don't know but the grandest actor the world has seen or will see—as in Ingersoll—voice, vitality, and so on—full—overflowing—with accumulation of fact, feeling, actual palpitating experience—crowded into them, as crowded into me, by resistless forces of a proud pure ancestry—intricately woven from hardy, to hardy, purposes—splendid effects." And at this moment, after throwing all this out in a voice and with gesture powerful and fine, he sank back in his chair, closed his eyes, "And now I have talked too much! But you know, Horace, a man can't always be good. *And I want you to take this with you—assert it anywhere for me—make it felt as my message, declaration.*"
>
> And as I said my good-bye, he picked up Truth—waved his hand as I went out the door—and turned towards the light. (*WWWC,* 8:179-180, emphasis added)

*

Whitman described his experiences among the members of antebellum theatre audiences as "the things, indeed, I lay away with my life's

rare and blessed bits of hours, reminiscent, past—the wild sea-storm I once saw one winter day, off Fire island—*the elder Booth in Richard, that famous night forty years ago in the old Bowery.*"[29] Walter Grünzweig identifies this—or at least a very similar—night as fundamental to Whitman's idea of himself as an artist:

> In the evening, theaters opened up. In the huge bowery, for instance, holding 3,000 spectators, famous English guest stars played to an audience of raving, roaring workers and craftsmen enthusiastically applauding. There played the famous Booth, whom the 15-year-old Whitman had a first chance to see as Richard III. *Whitman for the first time in his life was thrilled by the impact of the artistic expression, the spoken word, the inspired gesture. In retrospect only are we able to grasp the intense emotion which was thus stirred up in the boy. We can imagine how he must have been impressed by the living word, he who, until late in his life, believed in his vocation as an orator as well as a poet, a great popular orator who with his powerful voice would lead the American people, would master them.*" (emphasis added)[30]

Whitman recreated this artistic thrill and awakening in a natural (poetic) theatre in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking,"[31] which shows the extent to which the theatre informed Whitman's poetic project of perpetuative utterance. "Cradle" is itself a theatrical set-piece that functions as a mini-play, which is, perhaps, why Whitman chose to first publish it in the *New-York Saturday Press*, which was the paper of choice for many actors and actresses among the bohemian crowds.[32] It is also the poem in which Whitman tells the story of his speaker-persona's own poetic genesis—as well as the poem in which Whitman most clearly depicts his ideal relationship between an actor (the bird) and an audience (the boy). Although it first appeared in *Leaves of Grass* in 1860—the same year as "Poets to Come"—"Cradle" is set decades earlier, during the speaker's youth on the Atlantic shore. The poem features a robust cast of characters: the adult speaker; the young boy, a "child leaving his bed . . . alone, bareheaded, barefoot" (*LG* 1860, 343), along with the male bird; the female bird; the sea itself. These characters play clearly demarcated parts, indicated by roman or italic typesetting (Whitman, once a typesetter, knew how to visually differentiate voices on a page). The action takes place in a specific locale called "the scene" (344), described well enough for

any stage or set designer to reproduce it: "Out of the Ninth-month midnight, / Over the sterile sands and the fields beyond . . . / Out from the patches of briers and blackberries, . . . / From under that yellow half-moon late-risen and swollen" (*LG* 1860, 343). As the curtain rises, the speaker introduces the action by tearfully returning to his childhood:

A man, yet by these tears a little boy again,
Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves,
I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and hereafter,
Taking all hints to use them, but swiftly leaping beyond them,
A reminiscence sing. (*LG* 1860, 344)

The poem brings together the speaker's past as boy and present as man with his connection to the future, figured as "the here and hereafter." This transcendence of time is essential to Whitman's perpetuative poetics, which are revolutionary in part because, unlike a physical theatre, they aren't limited by temporal or material constraints.

As the speaker recalls his childhood observation of the lover-birds by the shore, he recounts two events that stress the importance of union or connection in Whitman's poetry. First, the boy invites the bird into a relationship by addressing it apostrophically: "Demon or bird! (said the boy's soul)" (*LG* 1860, 349). Second, the boy comes to believe the bird is addressing him as well: "Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? or is it really to me?" (*LG* 1860, 349). Thus, the boy's poetic career, his moment of artistic baptism, begins in a moment not of solitary inspiration but one of conversation and communion with a fellow-poet, the bird:

For I, that was a child, my tongue's use sleeping, now I have heard you,
Now in a moment I know what I am for, I awake,
And already a thousand singers, a thousand songs, clearer, louder, and more sorrowful than yours,
A thousand warbling echoes have started to life within me, never to die.
(*LG* 1860, 349)

It is only when the boy (at this point the *audience-reader*) communes with the bird (at this point the *actor-singer-poet*) that the "thousand songs" within him stir to life and he recognizes the irrevocability of

his mission, his personal teleology, his "destiny." It is only at this point of communion, that is, that the boy-audience *becomes* the new actor—the new poet. In his moment of poetic initiation, the boy does not yet know for what or whom he sings. Although his mission still hasn't been clarified, he can nonetheless declare the poet's ineluctable role. He is born out of ("projected by") and indebted to ("never more shall I cease perpetuating you") the songbird with whom he identifies:

O you singer solitary, singing by yourself, projecting me,
O solitary me listening, never more shall I cease perpetuating you,
Never more shall I escape, never more the reverberations,
Never more the cries of unsatisfied love be absent from me,
Never again leave me to be the peaceful child I was before what there in the night,
By the sea under the yellow and sagging moon,
The messenger there arous'd, the fire, the sweet hell within,
The unknown want, the destiny of me. (*LG* 1860, 349–350)

The bird—a one-time "singer solitary"—and the boy—heretofore a "solitary me"—are now linked in a never-ending cycle of projection and perpetuation that serves as a model for the speaker's relationship to his readers, his "Poets to Come," whom he will "project" and who will never cease to "perpetuate" him.[33]

The moment of poetic origin depicted in "Cradle" is the moment when perpetuative utterance begins. In this moment of creative nativity, the boy literally can't resist his poetic purpose. He is "arous'd"—suggestive of arising from sleep as well as sexual excitation—and his "destiny" is revealed. He loses forever ("Never again") his previous existence as a "peaceful child" with an "unknown want," because the bird—the original "messenger" of this drive to create—has lit the fires of "the sweet hell within," a poetic life in which he must repeat again and again "the cries of unsatisfied love." It isn't enough for him simply to watch another singer, to be the audience: he must become a singer himself. But he knows this only because *he has been the audience*, "absorb"[ing] and "adopt"[ing] the influence of the actors just as Whitman did at the Old Bowery.

This same state of restless seeking and, perhaps, restless "singing"—this inability to be a mere passive observer—is what

Whitman desires of his readers, his Poets to Come, not as they witness a mournful birdsong but as they read and become "arous'd" by his poetry. By creating his own songs in response to the bird, the boy-then-speaker shows readers as an audience how to respond to Whitman's poetic performances. His song-poems, born out of creative compulsion, inspired by his experience as *audience*, hold and unify multiple internal identities and voices, represented by a thousand reader-singers—in other words, a thousand performers. And here "a thousand songs" is subordinate to "a thousand singers": these future thousand songs issue not from the speaker-poet but from his "Poets to Come" that will follow him. These readers are all audiences-turned-actors, unified in the body of his single verse—a verse that must be responded to, and perpetuated, not merely read. The reader must be prepared to take some responsibility: "Nor is it by reading it you will acquire it" (*LG* 1860, 369). Mere reading is too passive and too easy: it is simply not enough—a perpetuative *audience*, in short, is always more than just a reader.

Whitman does far more in his poetry in the theatrical vein than simply create poetic *dramatis personae*, or even replicate actorly points or hushes. It is specifically the dialogic conventions of—and, thereby, the politics of—the Bowery that he closely mimics, especially in his insistence on the reader-audience's centrality to the text-performance. He renders his reader-audience indispensable to the poetic text-performance, just as the audiences of antebellum theatrical performances were essential to the evening's entertainment. He seeks in his poetry to teach his reader-audiences how to create a new poetic space of exchanged, and sometimes even overlapping, utterance. He attempts to capture the interplay between speaker and audience, to create a transcendence of temporal and spatial boundaries, to inspire a perpetuative utterance that was possible in most of his lifetime (before the advent of the phonograph) only with published literature, not of performed or spoken literature. The materiality of the text matters here; it allows Whitman to address "whoever it is holding me now in hand." It is, I would argue, a primary distinguishing characteristic of his literary project, something essential that he refuses to let us forget.

Whitman struggled to understand how actors could pretend to

be "on"—how, in fact, they could *act* what they did not feel:

> I have always had one question for actors: a question they have never answered, however: I put it to them this way: How is it that whatever the conditions—sick, worried, fagged out, grumpy—they can turn their backs on the common life, away from distractions, and engage in the new role at once: everything thrown off but the tragedy, comedy, whatnot of the moment. (*WWWC*, 3:519)

Whitman couldn't get outside of himself to comprehend how an actor could escape himself—his identity, his feelings, his immediacy—well enough to convincingly portray the character at hand. But in his poetry, he didn't have to be "on" except in the moment of writing or inspiration. As such, the Whitmanian poetic "theatre" continues even now to host a speaker-persona who can build multiple, intimate, and dialogic unions with not only contemporary but also future reader-audiences, even after the poet's death. Thus Whitman's revolutionary poetry, unlike the Old Bowery and its ilk, remains still a kind of participatory microcosm, a space of spirited engagement where Whitman and the reader unite in perpetuative utterance.

In "Cradle," the young boy awakens to his poetic vocation because he is inspired by the actor/songbird to become a singer himself, always perpetuating and projecting the birdsong for new audiences. As Chanita Goodblatt has suggested, the interplay between the boy, the bird, and the sea in "Cradle" marks the beginning of the "breaking of the monologic hegemony of the lyric voice."[34] Whitman's utterances will become the readers' utterances, but not via *replication*. Their songs will be different—but, in their difference, they will *perpetuate* him and his literary mission.

Whitman's investment in poetry is not merely as a vehicle to get at other issues; it is an investment in utterance itself, his own and his readers', as we see with the utterances of both the birds and the boy (and even the ocean) in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking." It is, too, an investment in "jetting the stuff of new republics" into his readers; the "Poets to Come" and not his falsely claimed six children are his progeny. In another poem about the beach at night, these future poets are represented by a young girl:

On the beach at night,
Stands a child with her father, . . .
. . . holding the hand of her father. . . .
Something there is,
(With my lips soothing thee, adding I whisper,
I give thee the first suggestion, the problem and indirection,)
Something there is more immortal even than the stars. . . .

"Something there is," the speaker tells his child—Whitman's poetic progeny—"more immortal even than the stars." Perhaps this something is a voice, a song, a poem, passing from one "actor" to another, in the Whitmanian cycle of perpetuative utterance.

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NOTES

1 Horace Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, 1:5. All nine volumes of *With Walt Whitman in Camden* are available on the *Walt Whitman Archive* (whitmanarchive.org).

2 David Nowell Smith, *On Voice in Poetry: The Work of Animation* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 1.

3 There are exceptions, particularly in some of the Civil War poetry, such as "Come up from the Field, Father" or, especially, "The Dresser"/ "The Wound-Dresser," in which Whitman actually tells the reader to "follow without noise."

4 Whitman's poetry is not a lyric "utterance overheard" by the reader but a direct engagement between the poet and the reader. See Prins, "What Is Historical Poetics?" in *Modern Language Quarterly* 77 (2016), 22; and "Historical Poetics, Dysprosody, and *The Science of English Verse*," *PMLA* 123 (2008), 229-234.

5 Vincent J. Bertolini, "'Hinting' and 'Reminding': The Rhetoric of Performative Embodiment in *Leaves of Grass*," *ELH* 69 (Winter 2002), 1047-1082 (1044).

6 See Dana Phillips, "Whitman and Genre: The Dialogic in 'Song of Myself,'" *Arizona Quarterly* 50 (Autumn 1994), 31–58. Phillips uses Bakhtin to argue that the dialogic coexists with the practice of "fusion" in Whitman's poems. The problem with this characterization is that if two individuals fuse into one, dialogue

becomes impossible.

7 Bertolini's concept of *lyric hinting*, one of the few readings of Whitman's poetry that appreciates it as performative, underappreciates the full extent of the reader's agency—of the reader, that is, as *participatory* audience:

> The notion of lyric hinting encourages the reader to think of meaning as deep content obscured to one's immediate perception. The speaker's use of the term ["hint"] in effect charges the reader with the task of searching after, guessing at, attempting to 'hit' 'that which' will be 'use[ful]' to know, the learning of which will have some practical utility for her/him. The idea of hinting, that is, engages the reader's interpretive agency, linking it to the poet's communicative efforts, thus setting the reader on the path to understanding his poetry. (1060)

He implies here that there is one stable if hidden meaning—"deep content obscured to [the] reader's immediate perception"—embedded within the poetry's language. However, Whitman does more (and less) than "set the reader on the path to understanding his poetry." He cedes *more* power to the reader, and he does so by providing *less* information or guidance, which subsequently leads to potential multiplicities of meaning. As he writes in "Poets to Come," he leaves "the main things" to the reader; in "Cradle," he provides a theatrically-inflected template for this mutuality and multiplicity of meaning-production.

8 [Anonymous], "[Review of *Leaves of Grass* (1855)]," *The Washington Daily National Intelligencer* (18 February 1856), 2. Available on the *Walt Whitman Archive*.

9 *Walt Whitman and the Irish* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000), 59. Also available on the *Walt Whitman Archive*. As Kenneth M. Price has noted, "To hang the label of the 'Bowery' on Whitman … suggested a broad-reaching contamination: commentators who mentioned the Bowery did so to condemn Whitman through association with immigrant groups, moral degeneracy, and working-class culture." See *To Walt Whitman, America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 29.

10 A.S. Hill, "[Review of *Drum-Taps*]," *The North American Review* 104 (January 1867), 301-303. Available on the *Walt Whitman Archive*.

11 Whitman also was fond of the Park Theatre of his youth, describing it as "my university. I got Lord knows how much from those years!" (*WWWC*, 9:140). But, he reminisced much more frequently about his experiences at the Bowery, and his poetry more closely replicates Bowery practices.

12 This give-and-take differentiated the theatre from the opera, another important influence on Whitman's poetry, where audiences were well-behaved. For a sampling of the wide-ranging discussion of Whitman's poetry as operatic, including its use of the recitative and the aria and in part regarding "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," see William F. Mayhan, "The Idea of Music in 'Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking,'" in *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 13

(Winter 1996), 113-128; Donald Barlow Stauffer, "Opera and Opera Singers," in *The Walt Whitman Encyclopedia*, ed. J.R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings (New York: Garland, 1998), 484-486; and Robert D. Faner's *Walt Whitman & Opera* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1951).

13 W. Harrison, "Walt Whitman's 'November Boughs,'" *The Critic* n.s. 11 (January 19, 1889), 25. Available on the *Walt Whitman Archive*.

14 Walt Whitman, "The Old Bowery," *Complete Poetry and Selected Prose* (New York: Library of America, 1982), p. 1190 in the hardcover edition. "The Old Bowery" appears in the paperback edition, pp. 1209-1216.

15 For more on the history of antebellum theatre, see Lawrence Levine's *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy In America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 1990; David Grimsted's *Melodrama Unveiled: American Theater and Culture, 1800-1850* (University of California Press, 1988); Sean Wilentz's *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788–1850* (New York: Oxford Universitiy Press), 1984; and David S. Reynolds's *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography* (Vintage), 1995.

16 Alan Ackerman, *The Portable Theatre: American Literature and the Nineteenth-Century Stage* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 36.

17 Whitman frequently was among these audiences, as Floyd Stovall has assiduously outlined by listing the plays, actors, locations, and other details of a great number of the great many productions Whitman saw in the 1830s and 1840s. See Stovall, "Walt Whitman and the Dramatic Stage in New York," *Studies in Philology* 50 (July 1953), 515-539.

18 Walt Whitman, *The Journalism. Volume 1: 1834–1846* and *Volume II: 1846–1848*, ed. Herbert Bergman, Douglas A. Noverr, and Edward J. Recchia. New York: Peter Lang, 2003. *Journalism II,* 296.

19 Stovall, "Walt Whitman and the Dramatic Stage in New York," *Studies in Philology* 50 (July 1953), 515-539.

20 The "younger" Booths were Edwin and his brother John Wilkes, a celebrity actor in his own day but remembered today, of course, primarily as Lincoln's assassin. While the majority of the lines regarding actors in "The Old Bowery" are devoted to Booth, Whitman also recalls seeing Forrest at the Bowery, although he seems loathe to cede any ground to him as superior to Booth. He writes almost defensively that "certainly the main 'reason for being' of the Bowery Theatre those years was to furnish the public with Forrest's *and* Booth's performances—the latter having a popularity and circles of enthusiastic admirers and critics fully equal to the former" (emphasis added). Whitman, "The Old Bowery," 1189.

21 Forrest's effect on Whitman may not be surprising, as his stage persona was reputed to be the era's best—and certainly its most recognizable—embodiment

of Jacksonian democracy. Forrest was best known for playing all of his parts as a "Jacksonian hero" whose "physically expressive style was deemed by many to be *distinctly* American…. [he] was often taken to represent America itself" (Julia Walker 25–26).

22 Julia Walker, *Expressionism and Modernism in the American Theatre: Bodies, Voices, Words* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 17.

23 Whether or not a point was effective thus depended not only on an actor's skill but also on the audience's indulgence of the pause—and sometimes this indulgence (or lack thereof) was produced as much by the audience's perception of the actor *qua* person as by its opinion of the performance. In other words, what an audience knew about an actor, especially his or her politics, often affected its reaction to the performance. At the Old Bowery, actors such as Booth or Forrest, who were seen to embody Jacksonian democracy (and, as such, were Whitman's favorites), were heroes to the audiences—and so they were accorded hushes, as well as cheers, as reward. In short, the ways in which actors used points indicated both artistic decisions and political positions—and so, too, did the ways in which audiences framed their responses. One of the more spectacular demonstrations of audience power at the end of this era of theatre productions was the Astor Place Riot of 1849, which was related specifically to audience impressions of actorly politics and of their own role in responding, *as* audiences, to said actors. It may have been this violent riot, in fact, which brought the era of audience centrality to an end. As Whitman described it, it was a place featuring not only "the hurrahs for popular favorites…." but also—and, note, following one elliptical poetic point and producing another—"the fury of roused mobs…." (*LG* 1855, 9). Forrest was at the center of this riot, the "watershed event in the life of the American theatre," and yet it is Booth who receives the bulk of Whitman's attention in "The Old Bowery." For more on the riot, see Ackerman and Sean Wilentz.

24 C. Carroll Hollis has argued that Whitman's ellipses in the 1855 edition employ the "rhetorical pause," a technique employed by nineteenth-century orators, not actors. He focuses on the speaker's agency *in pausing* rather than on the auditors' agency in *allowing the pause.* See Hollis, "Rhetoric, Elocution, and Voice in Leaves of Grass: A Study in Affiliation," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 2 (Fall 1984), 1–21.

25 For evidence of the effectiveness of this technique, we need look no farther than the hundreds of poems in which later poets—Whitman's readers—do, indeed, shout back, perhaps most famously represented by Ezra Pound's "I make a pact with you, Walt Whitman, / I have detested you long enough." See *Walt Whitman: The Measure of His Song,* ed. Jim Perlman, Ed Folsom, and Dan Campion (Duluth, MN: Holy Cow!, 1998).

26 After 1855, Whitman continues to add passages that combine interrogatives with reader spaces. For example, in 1860: "Who is he that would become my fol-

lower? / Who would sign himself a candidate for affections? Are you he?"; "Are you the new person drawn toward me, and asking something significant of me?"; "Who is now reading this?"; and "Mind you the timid models of the rest, the majority?" Not surprisingly, all of these lines come from the "Calamus" poems, which among Whitman's post-bellum poetry are the most dialogic of his texts, the most insistent on pursuing and maintaining via Whitmanian cameraderie an intimate relationship between poet and reader. In all editions after 1855, Whitman removes the ellipses in "Song of Myself," which tracks with other changes (such as the addition of section numbers) that make the poem more conventional and actually function to decrease the potential reader-responsiveness of the poem.

27 Twenty-five of Whitman's 79 interrogatives are *closed*: after each of these 25 questions, Whitman does not leave room for reader response. Some of the closed interrogatives are not addressed to the reader at all. They apostrophically invite other parties into the poem: "Oxen that rattle the yoke or halt in the shade, what is that you express in your eyes? / It seems to me more than all the print I have read in my life" (*LG* 1855, 14). Some closed interrogatives are hypothetical, with the speaker not really expecting an answer: "If you were not breathing and walking here where would they all be? / The most renowned poems would be ashes …. Orations and plays would be vacuums" (*LG* 1855, 90). (This passage nicely demonstrates the centrality of *audience* to Whitman's conception of theatrical performance; without audience participation, play-performances "would be vacuums," meaningless and empty.) Some of the closed interrogatives ask questions that the speaker immediately answers, rendering the reader's answer unnecessary: "Which of the young men does she like the best? / Ah the homeliest of them is beautiful to her" (*LG 1855*,12). This interrogative occurs in the midst of one of Whitman's lyric passages; as such, the reader doesn't know the answer to the question and the speaker-actor must provide the answer. Finally, some closed interrogatives are simple *yes-no* options that do not require extensive space for reader response: "Have you heard it was good to gain the day? / I also say it is good to fall …. battles are lost in the same spirit in which they are won" (*LG* 1855, 23). The reader's answer here matters little—Whitman asks the question only as a lead-in to his next line. We might say that the closed interrogatives nip at the reader's heels, allowing him/her no rest: "I teach straying from me, yet who can stray from me? / I follow you whoever you are from the present hour; / My words itch at your ears till you understand them" (*LG* 1855, 77).

28 The word *soul* appears 63 times in the 1855 *Leaves of Grass*—and a whopping 247 times in the 1891-92 edition. *Souls* plural adds another 8 and 21 to the counts, respectively.

29 Walt Whitman, "Seeing Niagara to Advantage."

30 "Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries," in *Walt Whitman and the World,* ed. Gay Wilson Allen (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2005), 160-172.

31 Ackerman reads this poem as repeating the conventions of the opera, not the theatre (56, 58).

32 "Cradle" was first published in the *New-York Saturday Press* (December 24, 1859) as "A Child's Reminiscence."

33 See Gay Wilson Allen's *The Solitary Singer: A Critical Biography of Walt Whitman*.

34 "In Other Words: Breaking the Monologue in Whitman, Williams, and Hughes," in *Language and Literature* 9 (2000), 25–41.

LAURENCE HUTTON AND A NEWLY RECOVERED PHOTOGRAPH OF WALT WHITMAN

ROSE ROBINSON

"He had a face like a benediction," Laurence Hutton (1843–1904) said of Walt Whitman, quoting Cervantes.[1] "Few men ever impressed me so strongly…. It was not his verse…. It was his wonderful physical beauty" (214-215). Hutton—critic, editor, and avid collector—always admired Whitman intensely for his personality and his physical presence. Among Hutton's archives, now housed at Princeton University's Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, is an original print, from the negative, of Whitman, taken by William Kurtz in New York City between 1865 and 1873 and presented here for publication for the first time (Figures 1, 2); it will also be added to the online *Walt Whitman Archive* gallery of images of the poet. Aside from Hutton's print, there are two other known copies of the photograph: an albumen print of comparable quality once belonging to Harry MacNeill Bland and now held at the Detroit Institute of Arts[2] and a carte-de-viste held at Duke University.[3] The carte-de-visite, previously documented on the *Walt Whitman Archive*, is of a grainy quality and lacks the sharpness and clarity of the newly recovered print, making it difficult to compare either to other photographs or to later drawings based on the pose. The print held at the Detroit Institute has received no scholarly attention. The recovery of Hutton's print thus presents an opportunity for further research into the history of the photograph and its context. Since the striking pose served as the inspiration for several artistic interpretations, most notably a painted portrait by Kurtz and Thomas Dewing's 1875 chalk portrait (Figure 3), the recovery of original prints of this pose restores to the archives a portrait of Whitman untouched by later, deliberate artistic interpretation. This essay traces the possible dates for the photograph, explores the pose's reinterpretation and popularity through engraved

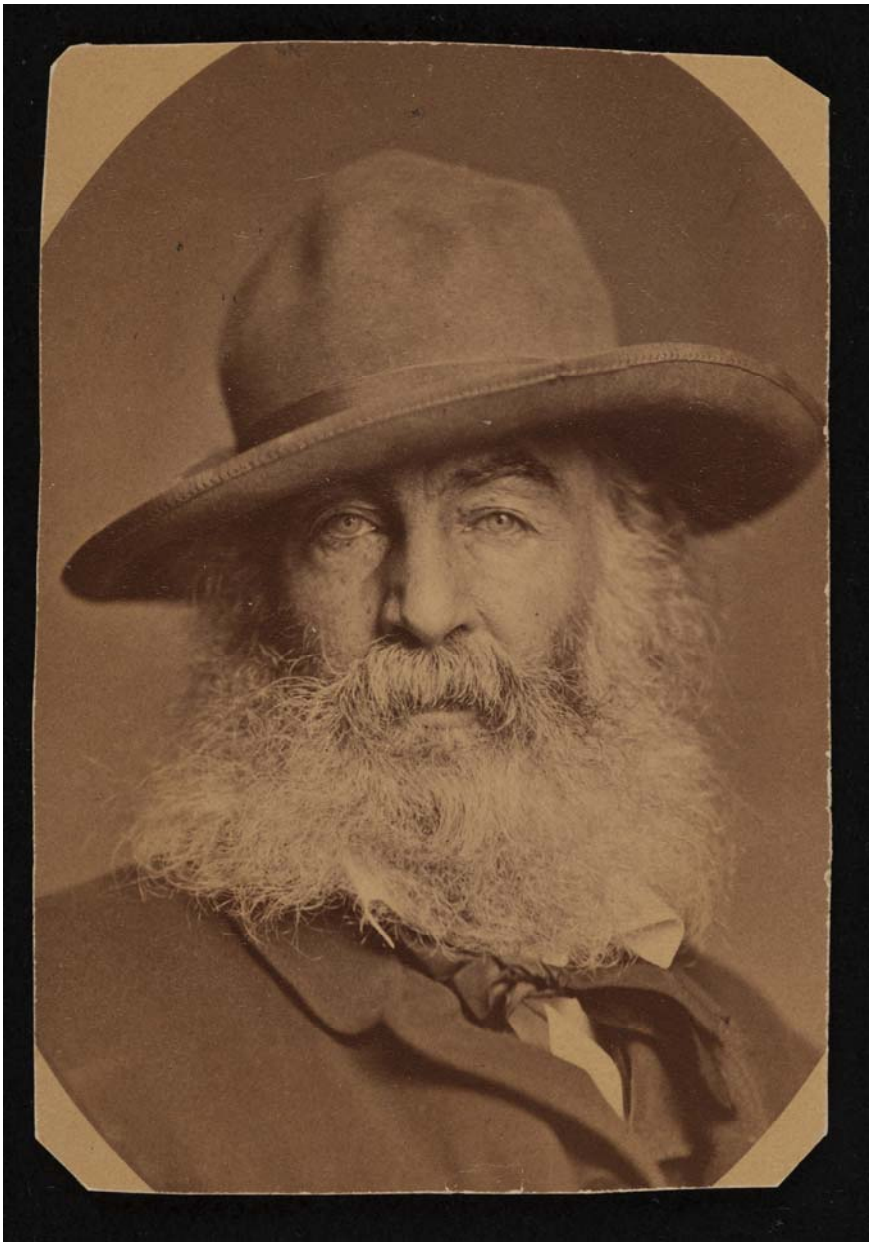


Figure 1: Walt Whitman photographed by William Kurtz. Princeton University, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections.

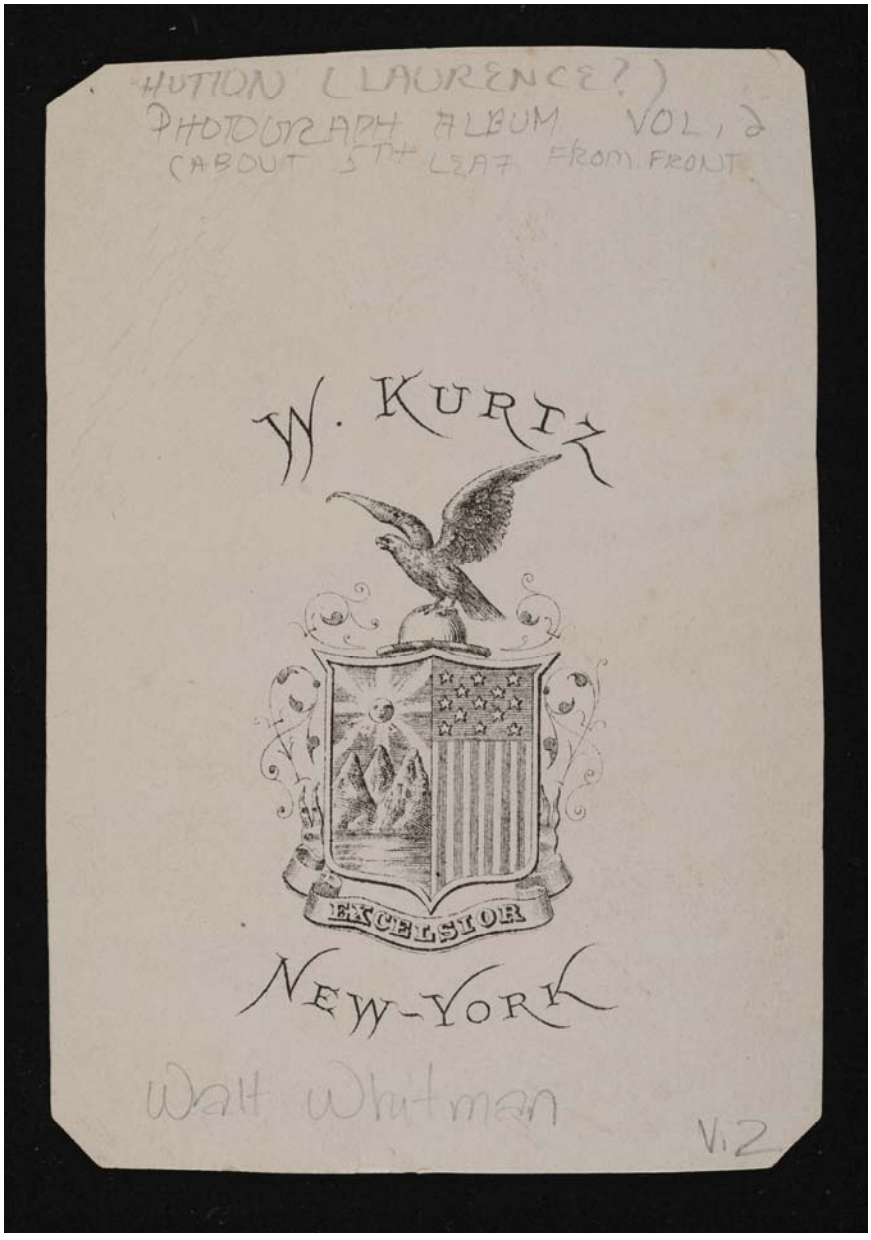


Figure 2: verso of William Kurtz Photograph. Princeton University, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections.

Figure 3: Portrait of Walt Whitman, Thomas Dewing. Chalk, 1875. National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, purchased through the Robert Tyler Davis Memorial Fund.

Figure 4: Engraving of Walt Whitman, New York *Daily Graphic* **(November 2, 1873).**

and drawn artwork, and finally briefly examines Hutton's biography and archive through his records of Whitman.

The time between the opening of Kurtz's first studio in New York City in 1865 and the publication of an engraving based on the pose in the New York *Daily Graphic* on November 25, 1873 (Figure 4) outlines the broadest range during which Whitman might have sat for the photograph. The stamp on the Bland print and previous research on Kurtz's technique strongly suggest that the photograph was taken between 1869 and 1872. Previous research on the carte-de-viste, summarized in the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review,* dated the photograph to the late 1860s, based on the opening of Kurtz' first New York office in 1865 and the photograph's demonstration of the Rembrandt technique, a then-novel process through which the photographer manipulated light and shade to detail the contours of shadowed parts of the face.[4] Kurtz did not introduce this technique until 1867, which dates the photograph more narrowly between 1867 and 1873.[5] Research on the Bland print further narrows the range. While Kurtz did not record the date or location on Hutton's print, Bland's print is stamped carefully with "W. Kurtz" on the left and "872 B'Way" on the right. Based on available sources, Kurtz kept an office at 872 Broadway from 1869 until early in 1874.[6] Whitman could not have sat for the photograph in 1874 because the *Daily Graphic* engraving had already appeared in late 1873, and Whitman's difficult personal circumstances in 1873 would have made sitting for a photograph in New York challenging. It is likely, then, that 1872 is the latest year for the photograph and 1869, Kurtz's first year in his Broadway office, is the earliest.

It would be tempting to date the photograph to 1873—several secondary sources do, often citing Henry Saunders' notation in *100 Photographs of Walt Whitman*.[7] Yet Whitman suffered a stroke in January of 1873, lost his mother in May, and moved to Camden, New Jersey, in July. It is unlikely that he sat for a photograph in New York. What is more likely is that these secondary sources are not dating the original print—they are (sometimes unknowingly) referring to a crayon portrait also completed by Kurtz and based on the print that Saunders attributed to 1873 (Figure 5).

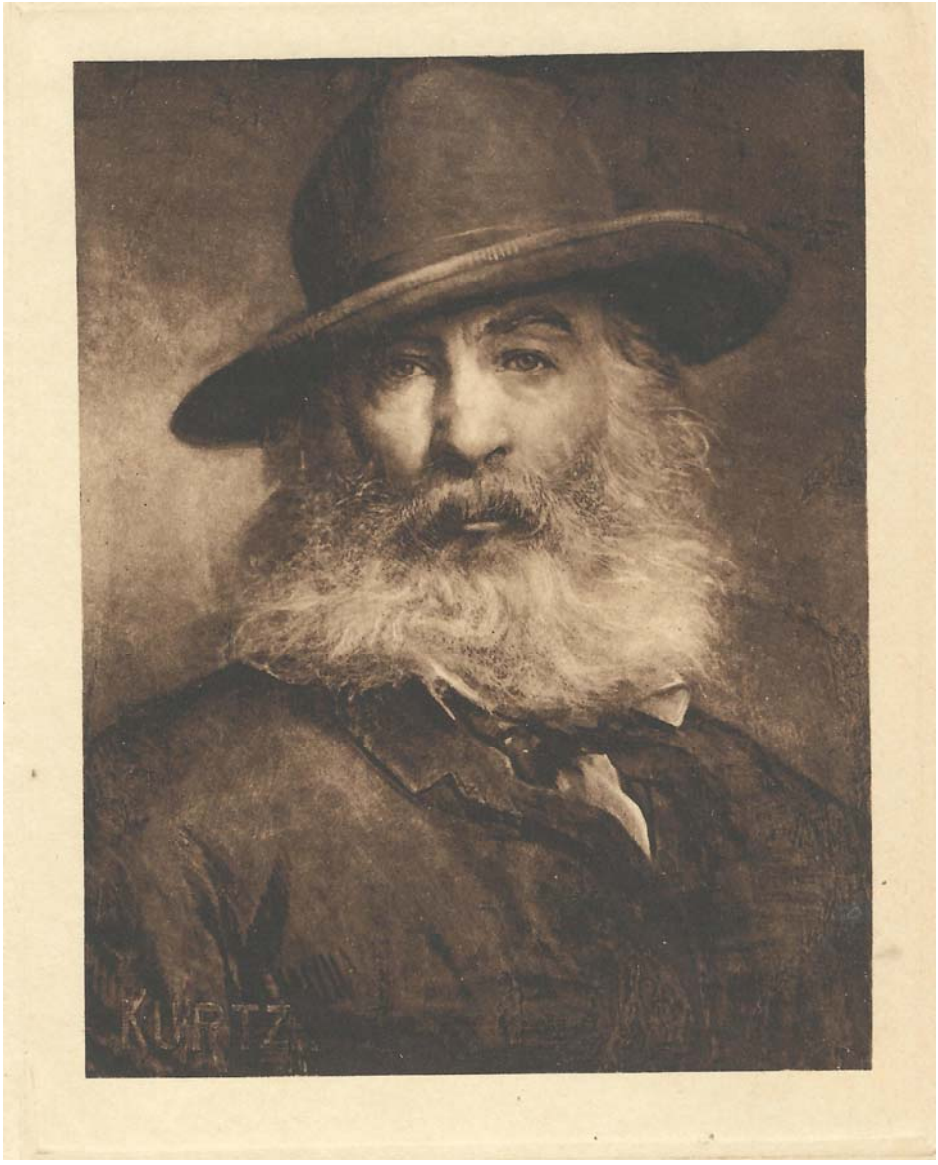


Figure 5: Walt Whitman, by William Kurtz. Crayon, ca. 1875. As reprinted in *Walt Whitman, The Gathering of the Forces*, ed. Cleveland Rodgers and John Black (New York: G. P. Putnam & Sons, 1920), frontispiece, vol. 1.

A crayon portrait involved printing a faint, enlarged image of a photograph onto drawing paper, then using pastel or charcoal to fill in the tones and details. The technique thus allowed individual artistic interpretation while still maintaining a strong likeness of the original subject, grounded in the photograph. The changes of tone and line that differentiate the Kurtz crayon portrait from the original photograph, however, are easily lost in its blurry reprints in newspapers and in Saunders' books—possibly one of the reasons that the crayon portrait and the photograph have been easily confused in attempts to date the latter. Saunders' notation in his 1948 compilation *100 Photographs of Walt Whitman* further confuses the two: "Image 42" shows the crayon portrait but labels it "1873 Photo. Kurtz." Saunders' 1946 edition of *Portraits of Walt Whitman,* however, draws attention to the crayon portrait as a separate image from the photograph. It includes a picture of the crayon portrait, the frame and the wall it hangs on visible in the shot, and describes the image as an 1873 "Kurtz enlargement now in [the] office of the Brooklyn Eagle." In other words, Saunders points to the existence of a second Kurtz image, an enlarged and edited crayon portrait based on the original photograph that has gone unnoticed in scholarly examinations of the pose.[8]

Before it ever hung in the office of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle,* the crayon portrait belonged to Whitman's friend John H. Johnston. Kurtz and Johnston both took great pride in the crayon portrait. In an article for the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Johnston recalls the poet's stay at his home in 1879.[9] One day, Whitman took Johnston's two children to Kurtz's Madison Square gallery for a photograph, and while they were there, "Kurtz made arrangements for a large crayon portrait of the poet." Kurtz was evidently proud of his drawn portrait; he hung it at the base of his stairway for several years and "would not part with it."[10] After Kurtz finally agreed to give the portrait to Johnston, it hung in Johnston's home, which Johnston described as "the rendezvous of literary New York," where the pose likely came under the scrutiny of many New York authors. Whitman himself did not admire the portrait greatly. Of the "W. Kurtz crayon portrait hanging at the Johnston's," he agreed with Traubel's verdict that "though a good piece of work it did not satisfy… as a just impression of Whitman."[11] The portrait

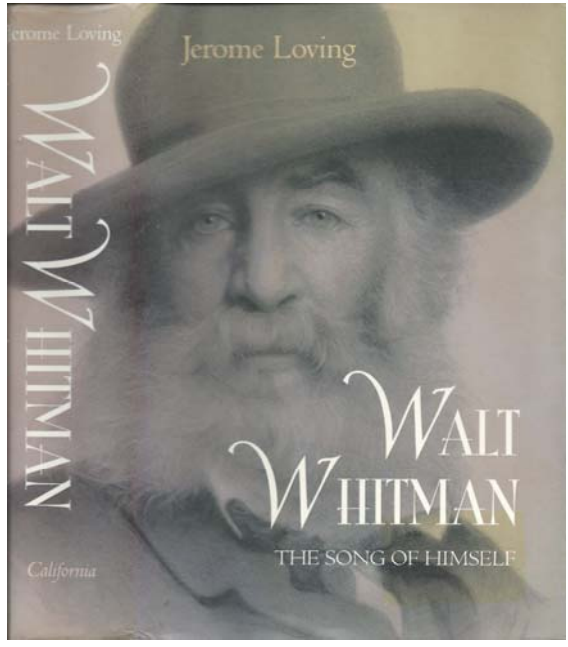
then passed to the building of the Little Mothers Aid Association when Johnston moved, and the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* later purchased it for their office.[12] When featured at an exhibit of Whitman memorabilia in 1925, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* declared that the pose showed Whitman "as most of his friends knew him – wearing a hack suit, a slouch hat on his white head, his beard blown by the wind."[13]

While Laurence Hutton and Henry Bland had access to the original photograph and Johnston's friends and the employees at the *Daily Eagle* saw the crayon portrait in person, most Americans during Whitman's lifetime would have encountered the pose as an engraving and it even inspired fond memories of the poet. When the woodcut appeared in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* on April 8, 1876, Civil War veteran Albert G. Knapp rushed to compare it to a "picture" Whitman had given him during the war, the appearance of the pose prompting memories of an old friend. "Is *this* Walt Whitman–'The Poet of health & strength,' *our* Walt Whitman of old?" he wrote in a letter to the poet, drawing attention to Whitman's capacity to move through personalities and avoid capture in any single representation.[14]

The earliest appearance of the engraving I have found is in the New York *Daily Graphic* on November 25, 1873, attributed to an R. Piquel. Curiously, the Library of Congress holds a fifth edition of *Leaves of Grass* (1872) that includes a frontispiece engraving of Whitman's full body, attributed to C. M. Jenkin based on a drawing by W. J. Hennessy, although that edition was not distributed with a frontispiece (Figure 6). The head is in the same pose as the Kurtz photograph but slightly askew from the body, as if the engraver had used two different sources to represent the body and the head. Since the frontispiece appears to have been added later, it is impossible to date the Jenkin/Hennessy engraving to 1872.[15] Engravings of the pose are scattered across newspapers and more recent books on Whitman. In later years, as newspapers began printing photographs, the crayon portrait was also printed over and over, often with the caption "Walt Whitman in his Prime."[16]

The pose of the Kurtz photograph may be most familiar to today's readers for its heavy similarity with Thomas Dewing's 1875 chalk portrait, which served as the cover image for Jerome Loving's biog-

Figures 6 and 7: Frontispiece, 1872 edition of *Leaves of Grass;* drawing by W. J. Hennessy; engraving by C. M. Jenkin (above). *Walt Whitman: The Song of Himself* (1999), chalk portrait by Thomas Dewing (below).



raphy, *Walt Whitman: The Song of Himself* (1999) See figure 7. In February of 1875, Thomas Dewing presented the portrait at an exhibition hosted by the Boston Art Club in Boston's Studio Building, where it was "singled out for its excellence of technique," and won Dewing the attention of Peter and Susan Gansevoort of Albany, New York, who subsequently funded Dewing's travels and studies in Paris.[17] The chalk portrait is now in the collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Prior to the recovery of the Kurtz original, there had been some question as to whether Dewing worked from a photograph, an engraving, or from life. Susan Hobbs, in *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing* (1996), notes that though it was possible that Dewing worked from life, it was highly unlikely, given that there is no evidence that the poet and the artist were in the same city in 1875. She remarks on the similarities between Whitman's pose in Dewing's portrait and several other photographs, but makes no mention of the *Daily Graphic* engraving (57). In an article published ten years earlier, however, Hobbs had noted the similarity between the portrait and the *Daily Graphic* engraving and suggested that the engraving was Dewing's source.[18]

Hobbs was not able to find written evidence of Dewing's inspiration for the chalk portrait, nor was I, but the similarities between Dewing's portrait and the Kurtz photograph strongly suggest that Dewing worked directly from the photograph. It is unlikely that he would have worked from the Kurtz crayon portrait, which would have involved the direct copying of another artist's work. If Johnston remembered correctly that Kurtz commissioned his crayon portrait in 1878 or 1879, not 1873, then Dewing's work predates Kurtz's crayon portrait but not the photograph. It is also unlikely that Dewing worked from the *Daily Graphic* engraving, since several details of shape and shadow, present in the photograph but ignored in the engraving, are reproduced in the chalk drawing. The pose and form in Dewing's portrait and the Kurtz photograph appear almost identical at first glance: the block of highlighting along Whitman's left brow retains its shape; the dark tones that mark his jawline and the shadows where his beard meets his skin all follow exactly the same contours; the lines

under Whitman's right eye divide in the same pattern. If Dewing had not had access to the original Kurtz photograph, these similarities would have to be assumed to be incidental, an unlikely coincidence given Dewing's talent for reproducing details with a high level of technical accuracy. The obvious differences between the photograph and the Dewing portraits, such as the length of the collar and the dark square in the photograph where the dome of the hat meets the brim on Whitman's right, also differ between the chalk portrait and the *Daily Graphic* engraving, suggesting that Dewing deliberately altered them for aesthetic purposes.

For the first time, the recovery of the original print restores to the archive the image of this pose before its alteration under the hands of Kurtz, the engravers, and Dewing. Whitman himself pointed out (and gently criticized) the tendency of artists to change what they see: "I find I often like the photographs better than the oils—they are perhaps mechanical, but they are honest. The artists add and deduct: the artists fool with nature—reform it, revise it, to make it fit their preconceived notion of what it should be" (*WWWC,* vol. 1, page 131). As well as the more obvious adjustments from the photograph, both Dewing and Kurtz, in his crayon portrait, appear to have made subtle revisions to make Whitman look younger and grander. Kurtz, an artist by training prior to his entrance into photography, softened the beard in the crayon portrait, smoothed Whitman's skin, and darkened the shadows and the background considerably, then signed his name boldly in the lower right corner. Whitman thus appears to emerge from a dark, moody background, his hat and body almost disappearing into the shadows. Dewing, on the other hand, gently revised the lights and darks so that the very darkest tone—a natural focal point—appears in Whitman's pupils, effectively locking the viewer's gaze with Whitman's. Dewing's Whitman has fewer wrinkles and is almost completely free of skin blemishes. His beard is smooth, and there are fewer bags under his eyes. As Hobbs noted, the artist "idealized his subject completely."[19] Dewing's Whitman appears younger and almost ethereal. In contrast, Kurtz's original photograph records a crease at the bridge of Whitman's nose, spots on his face, creases in the lids around his eyes, and the rough texture of the poet's beard.

The Whitman preserved in the original print is captivating because of, not in spite of, the camera's faithfulness to the evidence of age and experience in Whitman's face.[20]

While reproductions of the pose were familiar to many of Whitman's contemporary readers and, through Dewing's work, remain known today, the original photograph never attained the same popularity. I have not found a written record about Laurence Hutton's print of the photograph, or a record of its passing from Kurtz to Hutton, even though Hutton, an avid collector of "everything that brought him closer to art and literature and history," recorded the means by which he obtained several other pieces of Whitman memorabilia.[21] Regardless of how he obtained the print, it seems most likely that the photograph stayed in one of Hutton's albums or possibly hung on the wall of his home.

A *New York Times* piece on Hutton's home and collections noted that "on the walls of the house, from the street vestibule, thence throughout the library, and the dining room, up the stairway, and in the living rooms, the 'workshop' and the bedrooms, [hung] portraits signed or written upon by the originals thereof."[22] The author noted a Whitman portrait among these in a room on the second floor: "Under his own portrait on the wall Walt Whitman has written, 'The whole wide ether / Is the eagle's sway, / The whole earth is / The brave man's fatherland."[23] The Kurtz print, even though it is small, may have been the one hanging on the wall with Whitman's writing underneath—images of his home show that Hutton hung pictures of all shapes and sizes. If it was, the photo was eventually removed and placed in an album.[24] If the portrait mentioned in the *New York Times* was another Whitman portrait, however, it appears to have been lost from the collections.[25]

Regardless of where he kept the photograph, Hutton left his documents, autographs, books, "photographs and prints, framed and unframed" to the care of four executors, who donated the collections to Princeton University after his death.[26] At the time of the donation, the Kurtz photograph was in one of eleven albums, which probably sat on a shelf in the library, unnoticed, for several years, as the library was not prepared to handle the enormous collection at first. Most items

were given call numbers, while the "miscellaneous items like photographs were put in boxes and put out," and by the time the university established its manuscripts division, some papers had gone missing.[27] The Kurtz photograph, however, has been carefully catalogued as part of the extensive Hutton collections.

The extant Laurence Hutton collections, preserved at Firestone Library, include over two thousand letters, his collection of books (many personally inscribed by the authors), hundreds of photographs, his family papers, and—the most eclectic of his collections—one of the world's largest sets of death masks of both Hutton's contemporaries and of historical figures.[28] His dictated memoir, *Talks in a Library with Laurence Hutton* (1905), details the history of some of the artifacts, records the existence of now-lost items, and provides several amusing anecdotes about prominent nineteenth-century figures, including a few about Whitman.

Hutton was a writer, editor, and collector, famous especially for his wide network of friends and his tendency to mark those friendships with memorabilia. As Jesse Lynch Williams, a Pulitzer-Prize winning dramatist, noted, "There was hardly a well-known artist, in words, color or sound, of the late Victorian period, whom Mr. Hutton did not know quite intimately"; in a headline, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* named him "Friend of the Famous."[29] His home in New York was a common gathering place for prominent nineteenth-century authors and artists. Brander Matthews, Kate Field, and Mark Twain, among others, all sat in his library to write, and Hutton was responsible for bringing together several literary and intellectual clubs.[30] He was also responsible for introducing friends who went on to foster independent relationships; Hutton introduced Helen Keller to Mark Twain (who called her one of the most interesting characters of the nineteenth century, next to Napoleon[31]) and William Dean Howells.[32] In addition to forming and facilitating deep and intimate friendships, Hutton was always eager to "imprison his associations in memorabilia," making him a remarkable figure for contemporary, archival scholars because he obsessively collected material records of his vast network of friends and acquaintances.[33]

Hutton himself submitted frequently to periodicals, edited various

collections, and published several volumes of his own work, including, among others, literary tour guides, two memoirs, biographies, and an encyclopedia of nineteenth-century artists with the author Clara Erskine Clement Waters.[34] In 1886, he took a post as the literary editor for *Harper's Magazine* and began writing a column titled "Literary Notes" at the same time that William Dean Howells was writing his "Editor's Study."[35] After a long career, Hutton retired to Princeton, where he donated his collection of life and death masks, and his executors donated the rest of his collections after his death on June 10, 1904.

Whitman weaves in and out of Hutton's collections, and Hutton's memoir provides several anecdotes about the poet that serve to record Hutton's acquisition of different artifacts and draw attention to their relationship. They did not appear particularly close friends, though they met several times. Hutton admired—even revered—Whitman, though the admiration was based not on Whitman's poetry but his "wonderful physical beauty" and "his personal magnetism."[36] Hutton's admiration for Whitman predated any attempt of his to read his work, and Hutton later admitted to never having read the books of verse Whitman gave him. In his recollection of his first sighting of Whitman, Hutton already showed a tendency to magnify the poet as "king-like," and was surprised to hear him addressed by his nickname:

> I can well remember seeing Whitman before the Civil War—a king-like figure despite his rough clothes—sitting on his favorite throne, the box-seat of the Broadway omnibus of the period. He seemed to spend his whole time in riding up and down that crowded thoroughfare, studying men and things, no doubt, in the glaring light of the *New York Sun*. I knew even then that he was an unique figure in American life, the author of some queer sort of alleged poetry that was already being talked about but which I had not then tried to read. So when an uncle of mine, a youth of about my own age, hailed him once in my presence from a passing omnibus as "Walt!" I was greatly surprised. I did not suppose that anybody could call him "Walt" (215).

In 1877, Hutton and Whitman met for the first time through *St. Nicholas* founder Mary Mapes Dodge, of whom, according to Hutton, Whitman was "very fond" (223). If the photograph passed hands during one of their visits together, Hutton does not record it in *Talks in a Library*.

Of this first visit, Hutton noted that he found that Whitman's "talk was plain, homely, and tinged with an unexpected vein of 'that most uncommon sense of all, common sense'" (224). In exchange for "a ten-dollar bill," Whitman sent Hutton two volumes of his poetry, *Two Rivulets* and an 1876 centennial issue of *Leaves of Grass*.[37] Whitman dutifully noted the transaction in his daybook.[38]Hutton also saved the canceled check, dated March 31, 1877. It is the only sheet in the file marked "Whitman" in the Laurence Hutton Correspondences collection.[39] Hutton admitted that he prized "the books highly," but, again, "never read them" (*Talks*, 224).

In 1887, Hutton and his wife, Eleanor Varnum Mitchell, visited Whitman at a reception at the Westminster Hotel. According to an anonymous author of a report in the *Evening Sun*, Whitman's features so "set off his massive face and gave him a look of quiet grandeur" that it "led Mr. Laurence Hutton to remark, 'He looks like a god.'"[40]The author continued, "Indeed, he does look like Jove." Interestingly, when Hutton dictated his memoir in 1904, he mirrored both his own comment and the author's, noting once that Whitman "seemed to be a realization in the actual flesh of Michael Angelo's *Moses,* or of some of the ancient statues and paintings of Jove himself" (Hutton, 215). And of Whitman's appearance shortly before his death in 1892, Hutton remarked that the poet looked "like a god as painted by one of the old masters" (224).

Hutton recorded one final visit with the poet before Whitman's death, when Hutton again "came under his particular magnetic influence" (224). During that visit, Whitman drew Hutton down to the arm of his chair, spoke with him and held his hand, and Hutton felt "so distinguished above the rest" that, "in spite of myself, I became an enthusiastic worshipper of Walt Whitman—the man." Hutton, always inclined to "[imprison] his associations in memorabilia," eventually obtained a cast (possibly two) of Whitman's hand through a mutual friend.[41] He hung it in his library, side-by-side with a cast of Voltaire's hand, and placed an inscription from *Leaves of Grass* below, as if visually emphasizing the connection between the physical body and the poet's work.[42]

Hutton's collections include Whitman's death mask, cast by

Samuel Murray and Thomas Eakins with the help of two assistants—Eakins, who held the privileged position of painting the portrait of Whitman that Whitman felt was, of all his painted portraits, "nearest to being me," personally laid the wax on Whitman's corpse.[43] The mask passed to Hutton through a Princeton friend, Louis C. Vauxhall (*Talks*, 215). Hutton was fascinated with the way death masks reveal a sheltered or unknown side of a person: "In the case of the death-mask particularly, it shows the subject often as he permitted no one but himself to see himself.... In his mask, he is seen, as it were, with his mask off!"[44] Yet elsewhere, Hutton also implied that the Whitman mask did not fully capture the personality of the man he had met: "Although it is Whitman," he said of the cast, "it is not the Whitman I knew" (*Talks,* 214). For Hutton, Whitman's charismatic presence, his god-like beauty, could not be expressed in plaster, nor could the phrenological record convey that great and magnetic personality. This failure of representation admits either that the death mask could not fully "tell truth" (*Talks*, 214)—if truth here is defined as Hutton's experience of Whitman—or that the death mask, like every photograph and portrait of the poet, could capture only a single, fleeting side of Whitman. Like the Civil War solider who saw a different Whitman in the engraving than the man he knew, Hutton admitted that the death mask before him captured a side of Whitman's character that he had never seen.

But Whitman would not be surprised by these failures of representation: "The hero is after all greater than any idealization," he told Horace Traubel, "just as the man is greater than his portrait, the landscape than the picture of it." So the Kurtz photograph, the works based on it, and Hutton's other attempts to preserve his acquaintance with Whitman in memorabilia, add more incomplete records of Whitman's personality to, in his words, the "dozen of me afloat" (*WWWC,* 1:108). And yet of the Hutton artifacts, I would argue that the Kurtz photograph comes closest to visually representing Whitman's "look of quiet grandeur."[45] Whitman's gaze is direct and almost troubling in its immediacy. It holds our attention and grants us a glimpse of the same living presence that so captivated Laurence Hutton.

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NOTES

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1 Laurence Hutton, *Talks in a Library with Laurence Hutton,* recorded by Isabel Moore (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1905), 215. Hereafter, *Talks.*

2 "Photograph of Walt Whitman, 1873, albumen print." F1983.269, Prints, Drawings, and Photographs, Detroit Institute of Arts. Available at www.dia.org/art/collection/object/walt-whitman-51420.

3 "Photograph, 1873 (Saunders 42), carte-de-viste." Box 12, Folder 1. RL.01378 Walt Whitman Papers, Trent Collection, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University.

4 See note 21 (1860s) in "Notes on Photographs," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 4 (Fall 1986), 47.

5 See note 21 (1860s) in "Notes on Photographs," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 4 (Fall 1986), 47. For a contemporary biography of William Kurtz and a brief description of his Rembrandt Style, see Kurtz's entry in Ed Folsom, "Notes on the Major Whitman Photographers," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 4 (Fall 1986), 63–71. For more on the specifics of the "Rembrandt style" and an early biography of Kurtz, see "William Kurtz," *The Photographer's Friend* 3.3 (May 1873), 72.

6 Kurtz had several offices in New York, though I have not been able to find a single definitive source that tracks their locations. Newspaper records suggest that he moved into his studio at 872 Broadway in April 1869 and stayed until April 1874, though he opened a new studio in Madison Square as early as December 1873. Elbert Anderson, one of Kurtz's assistants, dated his move to 872 Broadway to April 1, 1869. I have not found any newspaper records that would suggest he moved to 872 Broadway any earlier. Furthermore, by May of 1869, Kurtz was advertising repeatedly for the return, to 872 Broadway, of a stolen crayon portrait. An announcement of Kurtz's receipt of an award from the American Institute for his crayon portraits in 1872 in *The Manufacturer and Builder* still records his address at 872 Broadway; finally, a notice in the *New York Daily Herald* on March 28, 1874, noted that "W. Kurtz, photographer, will remove from 872 Broadway to the more spacious rooms of his new building on Madison square (East Twenty-third street), about April 1." There was may have been a few months' overlap between Kurtz's vacating the Broadway office and establishing himself in Madison Square—while the *New York Daily Herald* records his removal in April of 1874, by December of 1873 the *Brooklyn Daily*

Eagle had noted that "The Artists' Association Palette," a well-known group of New York artists, had "leased a suite of club rooms and the grand gallery in the new photo-art building just erected by Mr. William Kurtz, on Madison square [sic]" and planned to move in the beginning of the new year. For Anderson's mention of the move, see Anderson, "Chapter 5," *The Photographer's Friend*, ed. G.O. Brown, vol. 1 no. 2 (April 1873), 60; For notices of a stolen portrait see "A Good Law," *The Evening Telegraph* (Philadelphia; July 27, 1869) and the connection to the Broadway address in a short notice beginning "If the party who took…," *New York Daily Herald* (May 30, 1869), 9. For a mention of the 1872 address, see "Official List of Premiums Awarded by the American Institute," *The Manufacturer and Builder*, 84; for a short mention of Kurtz's move out of the Broadway office, see "Removals," *New York Daily Herald* (March 28, 1874), 11. For the mention of the Artists' Association Palette at Kurtz's Madison Square gallery, see "The Artists' Association Palette," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (December 4, 1873), 3.

7 Saunders compiled one of the earliest attempts at a complete collection of Whitman photographs in *Whitman Photographs* and images of all kinds in *Whitman Portraits*. His editions were privately printed and he glued the pictures in by hand. Some information varies from edition to edition. I have had access to the editions held at Duke University. It is possible that other editions contain more information on this photograph.

8 Henry Saunders, "Image 42a," *Whitman Portraits* (Toronto, Canada: privately printed, 1946). David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University. The existence of a crayon portrait that hung in the office of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* also clarifies Clara Barrus' caption in *Whitman and Burroughs: Comrades* (1931). Clara Barrus reprinted an engraving after the pose that originally appeared in *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly* in June of 1892. She includes the caption, "From a wood engraving after the photograph taken by Kurtz in the *Brooklyn Eagle* office, 1873." Like other sources, her use of the word "photograph" does not distinguish between the original photograph and the crayon photographic portrait, so it is tempting to believe that she incorrectly dated the Kurtz photograph to 1873. Her notation "in the *Brooklyn Eagle* office," however, suggests that she was referring to the crayon portrait that hung there as the source for the engraving. See Clara Barrus, *Whitman and Burroughs, Comrades* (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1931), between 41 and 42.

9 In the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* article, Johnston dates the crayon portrait to 1879, though the newspaper caption dates it 1878, likely a typographical error on the part of the author. In a 1911 letter, however, Johnston dates the photographs with Whitman and his children to July 1878. Research on the *Walt Whitman Archive* suggests that Whitman did not visit Johnston until 1877, making 1878 or 1879 the most likely dates for the crayon portrait. It

may be that Saunders only estimated "1873"—he admitted that he had to make educated guesses in some cases. His estimations became the source for many other attempts to date the photograph and the crayon portrait, which explains why so many secondary sources point to 1873 as the likely date. See "Walt Whitman's Chum Tells of Good Gray Poet," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (March 8, 1914), 27.

10 "Walt Whitman's Chum Tells of Good Gray Poet," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (March 8, 1914), 27.

11 Horace Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, vol. 7 (1992), 343; available on the *Walt Whitman Archive* (whitmanarchive.org).

12 "Walt Whitman's Chum Tells of Good Gray Poet," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (March 8, 1914), 27.

13 "Whitmaniana Exhibit Opens Today; Private Collectors Aid Memorial Committee," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (November 8, 1925), 11.

14 Robert Roper includes an excerpt from Knapp's letter in *Now the Drum of War: Walt Whitman and His Brothers in the Civil War* (New York: Walker Publishing Company, 2008), 190. The excerpt specifies only that Knapp owned a Whitman image dated to 1863—it was tempting to wonder if he might have owned a print of the Kurtz photograph with a conflicting date. The full letter, however, confirms that Knapp was in possession of an "1863" engraving "by Schaff" (Knapp means the 1860 engraving by Stephen Alonzo Schoff that appeared as the frontispiece to the 1860 *Leaves of Grass*). For the full letter from Knapp to Whitman, dated April 2, 1876, see Charley Shively's collection of letters in *Drum Beats: Walt Whitman's Civil War Boy Lovers* (San Francisco: Gay Sunshine Press, 1989), 154. Shively, furthermore, reproduced the engraving in the back of his book and labeled it a "William Kurtz engraving, 1860s" (232).

15 There is a tenuous connection here with Laurence Hutton. W.J. [William James] Hennessy illustrated both this frontispiece and, in 1872, a series of portraits of the actor Edwin Booth. Edwin Booth (brother of the infamous John Wilkes Booth) was a very close friend of Hutton's. Hutton wrote a short biography of him, and Hutton's collections at Princeton include an extensive set of letters from Booth. It is possible that the Kurtz photograph, which Hennessy may have had access to for the engraving in the frontispiece of *Leaves of Grass* (unless he based it on the crayon portrait), passed to Booth and then to Hutton, or that Hutton knew Hennessy personally. I have not been able to access the letters to Hutton from Booth for any references to Whitman or a photograph of him, but it is an area for further research. See Figure 6.

16 Saunders' *Whitman Portraits* (1946) catalogues some of the reprints of the crayon portrait. The full caption for the crayon portrait, Image 41, reads:

"41. 1873. Kurtz enlargement now in office of the Brooklyn Eagle.

Brooklyn Eagle, May 10 1919; May 31 1919.

Longislander, May 30 1919, p. 28.

Lit. Digest, June 21 1919, p. 28.

Gathering of the Forces, 1920, vol. 1, frontis.

Boston Transcript, Dec 24 1920.

N.Y. Times, Jan 2 1921; June 10 1923; Mar. 21 1926.

Current Opinion, Marc. 1921, p.384.

M.van Doren, Anthol. World Poetry, 1928, on jacket."

These reprints vary in quality; the frontispiece for *Gathering of the Forces* offers a particularly sharp image. See Figure 5.

17 Thomas Wilmer Dewing, *Walt Whitman*, 1875, chalk on paper, Smithsonian American Art Museum, https://americanart.si.edu/artwork/walt-whitman-6781. See Figure 3.

18 Hobbs footnotes her suggestion that Dewing's portrait was drawn from the *Daily Graphic* engraving by pointing to a woodcut in the collection of one of Whitman's literary executors, Richard Maurice Bucke, "which is almost identical in detail to Dewing's drawing." See Susan Hobbs, "Thomas Wilmer Dewing: The Early Years, 1851-1885," *The American Art Journal* 13 (Spring 1981), 10–13.

19 Hobbs, "Portrait of Walt Whitman," 57.

20 Photography may be a more faithful representation of the visual field than a drawn or painted work, but the process of photography also bears its own manipulations of what Whitman called "nature" to fit aesthetic ideals. Kurtz's Rembrandt style relied on a series of reflectors and counter-reflectors to control how light hit the subject—Kurtz manipulated not the medium, but the visual field itself. The author of an 1872 biography of the photographer declared that Kurtz had "determined that the roving sunbeam was as tractable as the painter's pencil". Where the traditional artist acts, in Folsom's words, as a "mediating consciousness" between the "fullness of the visual field and the representation of that field," Kurtz acted as a "mediating consciousness" between an environment previously untouched by aesthetic ideas and the resulting visual field. Kurtz may have, in his own words, produced "effects by different means than those employed by artists," but he nevertheless added and deducted and fooled with the physical conditions around his subject to heighten the contrast in the resulting image. Kurtz's process of setting up the visual environment around Whitman marks the first manipulation of observable reality for aesthetic ideals, while his crayon portrait and Dewing's artistic

interpretation of the photograph mark the second revision of the visual record. See "History of Photography in America," *The Phrenological Journal and Life Illustrated,* 54.5 (May 1872), 298-299. See also Ed Folsom, "Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture," *A Companion to Walt Whitman,* ed. Donald D. Kummings (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 275. For Kurtz's advice on backgrounds and reflectors and some comments on photography and art, see William Kurtz, "On Backgrounds and Reflectors," *The Illustrated Photographer* (January 14, 1870), 604.

21 Robert H. Ball, "Laurence Hutton, Collector and His Famous Friends," *Princeton Alumni Weekly,* 33 (March 31, 1933), 560.

22 Francis Knowles, "Authors at Home, XVL: Laurence Hutton in West Thirty-fourth Street," *New York Times* (February 5, 1898), 20.

23 Knowles, "Authors at Home," 20. In *Specimen Days,* Whitman attributes this quote to Euripides. See "Samples of My Common-Place Book," *Poetry and Prose,* 883.

24 The description for the Laurence Hutton Photograph Albums, available online on the website for Princeton's Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, notes "the collection consists of several hundred photographs removed from 11 photograph albums, compiled by Hutton." A pencil marking on the back of the Kurtz photograph records the photograph's placement a few pages from the front in the "second volume" (presumably these markings were made by a librarian to note the placement of the photo in Hutton's original albums).

25 The only other mention I have found of a Whitman photograph or portrait belonging to Hutton appears in Hutton's personal catalogue of his library. Hutton's copy of *Two Rivulets* (1876) included a portrait of Whitman facing the title page. The portrait was likely the 1872 Pearsall photograph included in other editions of *Two Rivulets.* The finding aid for the copy held in the Laurence Hutton Collection at Princeton University's Rare Books and Special Collections notes the presence of a signed photograph of Whitman as the frontispiece. See page 192 in *Laurence and Eleanor Hutton: Their Books of Association,* cataloged by M.E. Wood (privately printed, 1905), 192. Available on *HathiTrust.*

26 Last will and testament of Laurence Hutton. June 18, 1904. New Jersey Surrogate's Court, "Laurence Hutton."

27 See Gale Lawrence, "The Literary Career of Laurence Hutton," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Notre Dame, Department of English, July 1980, 14. Her discussion of Princeton University's acquisition of Hutton's collections from his executors is based on a personal conversation between the author and Alexander P. Clark, Curator of Manuscripts, Princeton University Library, July 12, 1977. Lawrence's dissertation is the only scholarly examination of Hutton's life, and one of the few sources that examines his collections and literary work

in significant depth.

28 His archive is divided into several collections at Princeton University. See the overview of the collections on "Hutton, Laurence (1843-1904) at https://rbsc.princeton.edu/topics/hutton-laurence-1843-1904.

29 Jesse Lynch Williams, "Laurence Hutton: a Personal Tribute," *Princeton Alumni Weekly* 4 (June 18, 1904), 603; "Lawrence Hutton, Newspaper Man, Friend of the Famous," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (June 6, 1905), 24.

30 Hutton may have known Horace Traubel, though Traubel does not appear in Hutton's correspondence at Princeton University. Yet Paul Collins, in his book on the history of Thomas Paine's remains, recalls his discovery of a copy of Hutton's *Portraits in Plaster* (1894) in a used-bookshop in Portland. The copy was signed, "Horace Traubel / His book. / by his friend / Laurence Hutton." See Paul Collins, *The Trouble with Tom: The Strange Afterlife and Times of Thomas Paine* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2006), 257-258; Knowles, "Authors at Home," 20.

31 Helen Keller, *Story of My Life* (New York: Doubleday, Page, & Company, 1904), 28.

32 Keller, *Story of My Life*, 286.

33 Robert H. Ball, "Laurence Hutton, Collector and His Famous Friends," *Princeton Alumni Weekly,* 33 (March 31, 1933), 560. Ball's examination of Hutton's collections includes commentary on both the depth and quantity of Hutton's associations, Ball's personal count of the number of letters from particularly famous correspondents, and a brief examination of the correspondences from Mark Twain and Edwin Booth.

34 Gale Lawrence has compiled the most comprehensive bibliography of works by Hutton in the appendix of her dissertation, "The Literary Career of Laurence Hutton." The dissertation, however, is not widely available, and many accessible sources provide only an incomplete list of his works. For an accessible and comprehensive list of books edited and written by Hutton, I recommend Hutton's own catalogue of his library. See pp. 63-109 in *Laurence and Eleanor Hutton: Their Books of Association* (1905); available on *HathiTrust*.

35 Lawrence, "Literary Career of Laurence Hutton," 63. Whitman himself was a reader of Hutton's column, as evidenced in Horace Traubel's *With Walt Whitman in Camden*: "W. was reading Laurence Hutton's Literary Notes in Harper's when I entered," Traubel writes on January 24, 1889 (4:17).

36 Hutton, *Talks,* 214. Hutton does not specify who this uncle was or how well he knew the poet. The uncle was most likely one of his mother's brothers. His mother, Elisabeth Ann Scott (1819-1882), was the eldest daughter of the New Yorker Walter Scott. Hutton notes in his memoir for children that her brothers were about Hutton's own age, and so they became his "daily, familiar compan-

ions." See *A Boy I Knew and Four Dogs* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1898), 9.

37 For Hutton's description of this transaction, see *Talks,* 224. For the titles and details of the inscriptions, see *Laurence and Eleanor Hutton: Their Books of Association,* cataloged by M.E. Wood (New York: privately printed, 1905), 192. See also the entry for *Two Rivulets* (3988.1.391) and *Leaves of Grass* (3988.1.35.15), both in the Laurence Hutton Collection, Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University.

38 See Whitman's entry for "1877, March 30/ sent Lawrence Hutton," in "Daybooks, 1876-November, 1881," *Daybooks and Notebooks,* ed. William White (New York: New York University Press, 1977), 1:54.

39 Whitman, Walt, 1819-1892; undated; Laurence Hutton Correspondence, Box 10 Folder 57; Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

40 "An Old Poet's Reception," *The Evening Sun* (15 April 1887). Available on the *Walt Whitman Archive* (whitmanarchive.org); transcription based on *Daybooks and Notebooks,* 2:417–421.

41 Robert H. Ball, "Laurence Hutton, Collector and His Famous Friends," *Princeton Alumni Weekly,* 33 (March 31, 1933), 560.

42 For Hutton's description of the cast, its placement in his library, and the inscription, see *Talks*, 223. It is unclear whether Hutton obtained the cast mentioned in the memoir before or after the poet's death or if he owned two. In a notebook titled, "Catalogue of Various Things belonging to Laurence and Eleanor Hutton," from 1900, Hutton's wife, Eleanor Varnum Mitchell, made a note reading simply, "No. 2/ Walt Whitman's Hand/ April 17th, 1881." The Library of Congress holds a bronze model of a cast of Whitman's hand; although the finding aid does not date the cast, images show that it is inscribed with the same date that Eleanor Hutton noted and the initials "T.H.B." The initials indicate it is a copy of the cast made by Truman Howe Bartlett, mentioned in a letter from Bartlett to Whitman dated June 8, 1883, and available on the *Walt Whitman Archive* (whitmanarchive.org). The corresponding dates suggest that Hutton owned a copy of this model. However, an article titled "Hands That Have Done Things" in the *Chicago Tribune* (August 28, 1904), 4, suggests that Hutton obtained the original of a cast that was made shortly before the poet's death. Either Hutton owned two casts of Whitman's hand or there is a mistake in the record. See *Catalogue of Various Things*; Laurence Hutton Papers, Box 27; Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. See also "Hand Cast," *Walt Whitman Papers in the Charles E. Feinberg Collection: Memorabilia, undated; Bronze*, 1841 -1981. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, www.

loc.gov/item/mss1863002443/.

43 Traubel, *With Walt Whitman*, 1:131. For a description of Eakins' casting of the mask, see William McFeely, *Portrait: The Life of Thomas Eakins* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007), 152.

44 Laurence Hutton, *Portraits in Plaster from the Collection of Laurence Hutton*, Introduction (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1894), xiv.

45 "An Old Poet's Reception," *The Evening Sun*. Available on the *Walt Whitman Archive* (whitmanarchive.org).

NOTES

KEATS'S PROPHECY OF WHITMAN, WHITMAN'S CRITIQUE OF KEATS

1

In an October 1818 letter, John Keats writes to his younger brother, George, and sister-in-law, Georgina, who were at the time in the process of moving to Louisville, Kentucky, to inform them that their youngest brother Tom's bout with tuberculosis had worsened. Halfway through the letter, Keats turns from these familial concerns to consider the possibility and limitations of an "American Stryle" of literature:

> Dilke, whom you know to be a Godwin perfectibil[it]y Man, pleases himself with the idea that America will be the country to take up the human intellect where england leaves off—I differ there with him greatly—A country like the united states whose greatest Men are Franklins and Washington's will never do that—They are great Men doubtless but how are they to be compared to those our countrey [*sic*] men Milton and the two Sidney—The one is a philosophical Quaker full of mean and thrifty maxims the other sold the very Charger who had taken him through all his Battles—Those American's [*sic*] are great but they are not sublime Man—the humanity of the United States can never reach the sublime—Birkbeck's mind is too much in the American Stryle [*for* Style]—you must endeavor to infuse a little Spirit of another sort into the Settlement, always with great caution, for thereby you may do your descendants more good than you may imagine.

Keats's misspelling of "perfectability" is indicative of what he thinks of William Godwin's notion of the perfectibility of humanity and the inevitable "course of progressive improvement" that Charles Wentworth Dilke espoused. His misspelling of "countrey," meanwhile, is suspiciously similar to the antiquated spelling Edmund Spencer uses in *The Faerie Queene*: "Their kingdome spoild, and countrey wasted quight." These so-called misspellings are, in fact, not misspellings at all but elements of Keats's thinking, and they offer a means of under-

standing his critique of "the American Stryle."

Keats begins his consideration of the United States with a critique of progressivist historicism. William Godwin, in *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influences on Morals and Happiness* (1793), had argued that "perfectibility is one of the most unequivocal characteristics of the human species, so that the political, as well as the intellectual state of man, may be presumed to be in a course of progressive improvement" (11). Keats connects this optimism to the United States itself, echoing Voltaire's critique of Leibnizian optimism and its relation to New World expansionism. Keats clearly rejects this vision of history—"I differ there with him greatly," he states—before turning to the "greatest Men" of the United States, Benjamin Franklin and George Washington, the former of whom he deems "a philosophical Quaker full of mean and thrifty maxims" and the latter "sold the very Charger who had taken him through all his Battles."

Keats presents Franklin and Washington as opposites: on the one hand Franklin concerns himself too much with petty minutia, albeit disguised as maxims, while Washington is overly careless, disregarding even that which has provided him with his success. Both partake too much of a Leibnizian optimism: Franklin's meticulousness belies a faith in the profundity of even his most "mean and thrifty" statements, while Washington's carelessness belies an overconfidence in himself.

There is an irony to Keats's claim, however; he insists that Americans will never attain to the sublime but also encourages his brother to "infuse a little Spirit" in the New World, presumably so that Americans might attain to that sublimity. It is with this optimism in mind that Keats prophesies "the first American Poet" and offers "an infant's lullaby" that begins with a quote from Hamlet's Act III.2 soliloquy:

> If I had a prayer to make for any great good, next to Tom's recovery, it should be that one of your Children should be the first American Poet. I have a great mind to make a prophecy and they say prophecies work out their own fulfillment.
>
> 'Tis 'the witching time of night'
> Orbed is the Moon and bright
> And the Stars they glisten, glisten
> Seeming with bright eyes to listen

For what listen they?
For a song and for a cha[r]m
See they glisten in alarm
And the Moon is waxing warm
To hear what I shall say.
Moon keep wide thy golden ears
Hearken Stars, and Hearken Spheres
Hearken thou eternal Sky
I sing an infant's lullaby,
a pretty Lullaby!
Listen, Listen, listen, listen
Glisten, glisten, glisten, glisten
And hear my lullaby?
Though the Rushes that will make
Its cradle still are in the lake:
Though the f linnen then that will be
Its swathe is on the cotton tree;
Though the wollen that will keep
It wa[r]m, is on the silly sheep;
Listen Stars light, listen, listen
Glisten, Glisten, glisten, glisten
And hear my lullaby!
Child! I see thee! Child I've found thee
Midst of the quiet all the around thee!
Child I see thee! Ch[i]ld I spy thee
And they mother sweet is nigh thee!
Child I know thee! Child no more
But a Poet *ever*more
See, See the Lyre, the Lyre
In a flame of fire
Upon the little cradle's top
Flaring, flaring, flaring
Past the eyesight's bearing—
Awake it from its sleep
And see if it can keep
Its eyes upon the blaze.
Amaze, Amaze!
It stares, it stares, it stares
It dares what no one dares
It lifts its little hand into the flame
Unharm'd, and on the strings
sings
Paddles a little tune and signs
with dumb endeavor sweetly!
Bard art thou completely!
Little Child

O' the western wild
Bard art thou completely!—
Sweetly, with dumb endeavor.—
A Poet now or never!
Litt[l]e Child
O' the western wild
A Poet now or never! (*Selected Letters,* 155-156)

The same month these verses were written, Louisa Van Velsor Whitman and Walter Whitman, living in the West Hills district of Long Island, would learn that they were expecting their second child. This prophecy, as Keats deems it, or, alternately, this lullaby—especially in its final lines—bears a striking resemblance to Emerson's "The Poet" (1844), which famously inspired Walt Whitman to compose *Leaves of Grass* (1855). As Keats calls for a poet who is a "Litt[l]e Child o' the western wild," Emerson begins his essay with the image of "a moody child and wildly wise" and concludes with the famous exhortation: "O poet! a new nobility is conferred in groves and pastures, and not in castles, or by the sword-blade, any longer."

Both Keats and Emerson foresee an American poet who is childish and wild, associated with natural landscapes rather than European castles or manors, and it does not take long, in reading *Leaves of Grass*, to notice these twin characteristics of Whitman's poetics. "A child said, What is the grass? fetching it to me with full hands; / How could I answer the child? … I do not know what it is any more than he," Whitman famously muses, comparing himself to not only the child but also the grass itself—a concatenation of poet, child and nature prophesied by both Keats and Emerson.

Keats's letter—with both its lullaby and misspellings in mind—becomes prophetic of an "American Stryle" to come. After his discussion of Washington and Franklin, Keats concedes that "Those American's are great," adding an unnecessary possessive to the noun and so suggesting that his critique of Washington and Franklin revolves around their individualism and possessiveness. These Americans, the grammatical error suggests, mistake plurality for possession; they fret over the smallest minutia, then turn and sell their one prized possession. The irony is that Whitman's poetry does not eschew these

tendencies but embraces them unequivocally; Whitman transforms this individualism into the very essence of creation, a synonym of God. "Battles, the horrors of fratricidal war, the fever of doubtful news; the fitful events; / These come to me days and nights, and go from me again, / But they are not the Me myself": Whitman deifies the first-person singular pronoun and claims all things for himself, his possessions.

Whitman, in other words, does not so much avoid Keats's critique of the "American Stryle" as exemplify it, exaggerating the individualism of Washington and Franklin to such an extent that it bursts from its seams, becomes divine. Keats's misspelling of "Stryle," in this sense, is not a misspelling at all but a kind of hint at the stridency that would, with Whitman, come to characterize American poetry.

2

We need not presume that Keats intended his misspellings to reveal some hidden, unstated meaning about American culture. As Keats himself says, "prophecies work out their own fulfillment," and his prophecy is no exception. While he was composing his lullaby as a kind of paean to his brother's children, it becomes, with hindsight, a kind of prophecy of Walt Whitman, a prediction or summoning of an utterly American bard who would "paddle a little tune and sing [or sign] / with dumb endeavor sweetly." Whitman, in his own right, claimed to have read all of Keats in 1888 and said of Keats's poetry that it gives "the feeling of a gentlemanly person lately at college, accepting what was commanded him there, who moves and would only move in elegant society, reading classical books in libraries." Earlier in his life, however, Whitman had deemed Keats's work "sweet—oh! very sweet—all sweetness: almost lush: lush, polish, ornateness, elegancy" and, in a review of Keats's *Poetical Works* for the *Daily Eagle*, had remarked: "Keats—peace to his ashes—was one of the pleasantest of modern poets, and had not the grim monster of Death so early claimed him, would doubtless have become one of the most distinguished."

Keats's prophetic vision of Whitman is mirrored by Whitman's critical reception of Keats; what begins as adoration ends in scorn, just

as the sing-song lullaby of Keats's prophecy augurs, counterintuitively, Whitman's unrhymed free verse. Keats and Whitman are remarkably antithetical: one produced his poems before the age of twenty five, the other (except for scattered juvenilia, all rhymed and metered verse) after thirty; one wrote rhymed, metrical verse, the other unrhymed, unmetrical verse; one took as his poetic subjects Grecian Urns and Endymion, the other "Me myself" and "the blab of the pave." At the same time, the two share a number of biographical and aesthetic similarities: both have been historicized—wrongly or no—as scions of older, more well-established poets—Wordsworth and Coleridge for Keats, Emerson for Whitman—and both were raised in working-class households that were unable to afford tuition at Eton, in Keats's case, or, in Whitman's case, secondary school at all. Here are the opening lines of Keats's "Ode to Psyche," the first of his 1819 odes:

O Goddess! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung
    By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
And pardon that thy secrets should be sung
    Even into thine own soft-conched ear:
Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see
    The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes?

Compare this with the opening lines of Whitman's "Oh Me! Oh Life!":

Oh me! Oh life! of the questions of these recurring,
Of the endless trains of the faithless, of cities fill'd with the foolish,
Of myself forever reproaching myself, (for who more foolish than I, and who more faithless?) (410).

Both poems begin with an interjection; it was Robert Hass, in conversation with Czesław Miłosz, who noted the difference between "O" and "Oh": "'Oh!' [is] a long breath of wonder, the equivalent [of] 'Wow!' […] 'O!' [is] a caught breath of wonder and surprise, more like Huh!'" Keats's poem begins with a caught breath of wonder, the sudden recognition of a goddess, while Whitman's begins with a long breath of wonder, an adoration of "me," of "life." Both poems begin with short, fragmented sentences, punctuated by exclamation marks, and they continue with the use of a plural demonstrative adjec-

tive—"these"—reiterating an immediacy that is first indicated by those opening breaths of wonder. These poems are both apostrophic, and the immediacy of this address is reiterated by both the opening interjections and the use of demonstrative adjectives. They both give the sense that their speakers are in direct communication with a Goddess or "me […] life," respectively.

That said, what is particularly interesting is not the similarities between these two poems or poets but rather the ways in which Keats's prophecy and Whitman's critical analysis of Keats's poetry are remarkably apt: these two poets, though they never met and their lives only overlapped by some twenty-odd months, understood each other deeply and coherently. Keats predicted that the "poet […] o' the western wild" would be like a "litt[l]e child," spelling his words improperly as an illustration of this naïveté, while Whitman sees Keats as both elegant and insincere—overwrought, perhaps, but "sweet—oh! very sweet."

The observation that Whitman's poetry has a certain naïveté is nothing new. Joanna Zach, in her "Whitman and Miłosz's America" (2011), deems Whitman the "poet of ecstatic gibberish and childish astonishment," while, as early as 1959, Frederic Carpenter was complaining that "the duplicity of Whitman's 'innocence' has been condemned so often that Professor [Leslie] Fiedler truly calls him 'the whipping boy of many of our best critics.'" Keats's prophecy, however, reminds us that this emphasis on Whitman's innocence or childishness is deeply entwined with the European understanding of the New World as innocent and childlike. Keats sees the poet of the western wild as a "litt[l]e child," implying that the New World was itself puerile and undeveloped. Whitman's interpretation of Keats, meanwhile, illustrates the American conception of Europe as both elegant and pretentious, overly concerned with respectability.

3

The same month Keats wrote his letter to George and Georgina he was composing what has become, among English-language poets at least, one of the most well-known letters in the English language—the

letter to Richard Woodhouse in which Keats proclaims, "As to the poetical Character itself […] it is not itself—it has no self—it is everything and nothing—It has no character—it enjoys light and shade; it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated—It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. What shocks the virtuous philosop[h]er, delights the camelion [*sic*] Poet" (*Selected Letters,* 148). Keats' "camelion poet" has no trouble misspelling words or making prophecies and allowing them to "work out their own fulfillment"; Keats revels in the possibilities that open to him when he concerns himself no longer with consistency or virtue but with the negative capability of his language, its ability to defy, deny or resist clarity. Whitman shares both Keats's disregard for consistency and his penchant for playing the prophet, declaring in *Democratic Vistas*:

> Yet I have dream'd, merged in that hidden-tangled problem of our fate, whose long unraveling stretches mysteriously through time—dream'd out, portray'd, hinted already—a little or a larger band—a band of brave and true, unprecedented yet—arm'd and equip'd at every point—the members separated, it may be, by different dates and States, or south, or north, or east, or west—Pacific, Atlantic, Southern, Canadian—a year, a century here, and other centuries there—but always one, compact in soul, conscience-conserving, God-inculcating, inspired achievers, not only in literature, the greatest art, but achievers in all art—a new, undying order, dynasty, from age to age transmitted […] Arrived now, definitely, at an apex for these Vistas, I confess that the promulgation and belief in such a class or institution—a new and greater literatus order—its possibility, (nay certainty,) underlies these entire speculations—and that the rest, the other parts, as superstructures, are all founded upon it (969).

Whitman, in his typical, grandiose "American Stryle," is not content to prophecy about only one bard but "a new, undying order," formed not only of writers but also "achievers in all art." Dreams are important to both poets; Keats's "La Belle Dame sans Merci" tells of the "latest dream I ever dreamt" of "pale kings and princes too, / pale warriors, death-pale were they all," while Whitman, in "Song of Myself," exclaims, "Long enough have you dream'd contemptible dreams, / Now I wash the gum from your eyes." In the above prophecy, Whitman sees not only the prophecy itself but also the "hidden-tangled problem of our fate" as "dream'd," just as Keats connects his proph-

ecy of the "little child of the western wild" with a lullaby, which will, ostensibly, coax the child to sleep.

Misspellings and the blab of the pave, dreams and prophecies, goddesses and identity: these are subjects beyond the purview of the "virtuous philosop[h]er," who, like Whitman's "learn'd astronomer," is preoccupied with "proofs [and] figures, [...] charts and diagrams, to add, divide and measure." Whitman is as preoccupied with negative capability as Keats is: "Loafe with me on the grass, loose the stop from your throat, / Not words, not music or rhyme I want, not custom or lecture, not even the best, / Only the lull I like, the hum of your valvèd voice" (26). (The word "not," in the final version of "Song of Myself," is repeated over one hundred times.) As Floyd Stovall notes in his analysis of Whitman's marginalia in Aubrey De Vere's "Modern Poetry and Poetics" (1849), "Whitman bracketed much of [De Vere's] section on Keats, but [...] seemed especially interested in the following sentence: '[Keats's] mind had itself much of that 'negative capability' which [Keats] remarked on as a large part of Shakespeare's greatness.'" We often think of Romanticism and American Transcendentalism as critical responses to Enlightenment rationalism, but we often forget to think of these movements' antecedents, those movements that, like Romanticism and Transcendentalism, foreground the mysterious and negative, the opaque and enigmatic. As Norman O. Brown has argued, the antecedents of Romanticism are often lost in Western literary history because they arrive from the Islamic rather than the Christian tradition: ". . . the fundamental nature of Protestant radicalism is to eliminate angels altogether. . . . In the West . . . [t]he prophetic angel passes over into literature as it withers in the Church. In Dante and in Blake. And Muhammad is the bridge between Christ and Dante and Blake." We might add, as way of denouement, Keats and Whitman to that list.

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NOTES

1 John Keats, *Selected Letters,* ed. Robert Gittings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 154.

2 William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on Morals and Happiness*, Vol. 1 (London: Robinson, 1793), 11.

3 Edmund Spencer, *The Faerie Queene* (1590; New York: Penguin Books, 1978), 130.

4 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Poet," in *Essays & Lectures* (New York: Library of America, 1983), 467.

5 Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself," in *Poetry and Prose* (New York: Library of America, 1982), 27.

6 Walt Whitman, *Notes and Fragments*, ed. Richard Maurice Bucke (London, Ontario: A. Talbot, 1899), 109.

7 Walt Whitman, *The Journalism: 1834-1846,* Vol. I (New York: Peter Lang, 1998), 264.

8 Whitman, "Song of Myself," in *Poetry and Prose*, 23, 29.

9 John Keats, *The Complete Poems*, ed. John Barnard (New York: Penguin Books, 1973), 340.

10 Robert Hass, *Time and Materials* (New York: Ecco Press, 2007), 38.

11 Joanna Zach, "Whitman and Miłosz's America," *Przekladaniec. Between Miłosz and Milosz* 25 (2011), 84. Frederic Carpenter, "'The American Myth': Paradise (To Be) Regained," *PMLA* 74 (1959), 603.

12 Keats, *Complete Poems,* 299; Whitman, Poetry & Prose, 77.

13 Whitman, *Poetry & Prose*, 401-402.

14 Floyd Stovall, *The Foreground of Leaves of Grass* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1974), 248.

15 Norman O. Brown, *The Challenge of Islam: The Prophetic Traditions* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2009), 44.

STARRY NIGHTS: WHITMAN, EPILEPSY, AND VAN GOGH

This face is an epilepsy, its wordless tongue gives out the unearthly cry,
Its veins down the neck distend, its eyes roll till they show nothing but their whites,
Its teeth grit, the palms of the hands are cut by the turn'd-in nails,
The man falls struggling and foaming to the ground, while he speculates well.[1]

1

Epilepsy, as pathological experience and artistic realization, makes its appearance in both Walt Whitman's and Vincent van Gogh's night skies. The abnormal electrical brain activities of the epileptic body in the nineteenth century, of Van Gogh's temporal lobe epilepsy and of Whitman's brother Edward's "epileptic fits,"[2] provide a previously unrecognized link between Whitman's and Van Gogh's works. I will argue here that the connection between these two artists goes beyond Van Gogh's often-recognized appreciation for the poet, then, and is also manifested in their experiences with epilepsy, as well as in their mutual regard for and identification with the work of the French painter Jean-François Millet. My purpose is to suggest ways we might expand on previous criticism that has probed the evocative influence of Whitman on Van Gogh.

Since 1984, scholars have shown interest in Whitman's impact on Van Gogh, who proclaimed his admiration for the American poet in an 1888 letter to his sister, Wilhelmien. Critics have often quoted this letter to corroborate the artistic tie between Whitman and the Dutch painter:

> Have you read the American poems by Whitman? I am sure Theo has them, and I strongly advise you to read them, because to begin with they are really fine, and the English speak of them a good deal. He sees in the future, and even in the present, a world of healthy, carnal love, strong and frank— of friendship— of work— under the great starlit vault of heaven a something which after all one can only call God— and eternity in its place above this world. At first it makes you smile, it is all so candid and pure; but it sets you thinking for the same reason. The prayer of Christopher Columbus is particularly beautiful.[3]

Van Gogh, who was fluent in Dutch, English, and French, probably read the English version of *Leaves of Grass*. In "Echoes of Walt Whitman's 'Bare-Bosom'd Night' in Vincent Van Gogh's 'Starry Night,'" Lewis Layman argues that the landscape in the *Starry Night* painting corresponds to Whitman's "Song of Myself" and that "both men express similar visions of an interrelationship between two essentially androgynous forces,"[4] evident in Whitman's poetic lines about the "bare-bosom'd night" and in the puzzling crescent moon in Van Gogh's painting. Layman bases his argument of the androgyny of the crescent moon on Marc Edo Tralbaut's interpretation of the moon as "an old Chinese symbol, known as the Yin and the Yang." It is fitting to conjure up the notion of the androgynous ideal that has its foundation in the Taoist concept of Yin Yang.[5] Each part of the Yin Yang symbol takes up half of the circle, and between them there is a curvy line that resembles a perennially morphing watershed, which constantly changes its shape yet never disrupts the equilibrium between the two divisions. The quality of the androgynous moon, then, might be read as a microcosm of Van Gogh's androgynous mind. The essence of the androgynous ideal is that the androgyny is a congruous entity in which all dissonances are settled in a state of fluid fusion. In accordance with the parallel between the elements of Yin/Yang and moon/sun, Van Gogh's androgynous moon/sun finds its solid metaphysical representation in an eclipse, an astronomical occurrence that mystifies his starry night sky. Though scholars have sometimes interpreted the eclipse religiously,[6] we might instead consider the correlation between an eclipse's abnormal mix of light and shadow and episodes of Van Gogh's epilepsy triggered by photosensitivity. The eclipsed sun would then serve as the painter's postictal vision or memory following an epileptic episode.

Up to this point, the critical discussion of these two artists has been limited to interpreting the intertextual connections between Van Gogh's painting and Whitman's poems. Jean Schwind develops this method the furthest by arguing that the best way to determine the extent of the influence of Whitman's poems on *Starry Night* requires an inclusive survey of the poems Van Gogh may have read in order to demonstrate possible sources of inspiration for the painting. However,

her critical rendering misses the tremendous power of creativity and the multidimensional sources of inspiration manifested in the works of both artists that (un)consciously pursue the androgynous ideal in a continuously flowing and yet fluctuating state of artistic creation.

Creativity is oceanic, like the tidal estuary Whitman describes in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"—constantly "flow[ing] with the flood-tide, and ebb[ing] with the ebb-tide!"[7] The volatility of creativity is manifest in Whitman's poetic conception of the sea, tidal basins, or bodies of water in general. Schwind's attempt to harness this artistic irregularity in order to demonstrate a correlation between specific passages in Whitman's poems and the images in Van Gogh's painting finally brings the exploration of the relationship between the two artists no further than the preceding criticism.

The androgynous ideal manifested in the works of these two artists serves to conceal and settle the turmoil in their personal lives. Van Gogh's epileptic episodes did not hinder his desire to depict St. Rémy and its residents. Schwind uses passages in *Leaves of Grass* to evoke what she calls the "lifeless town" (5), arguing that "Van Gogh read Whitman far more closely and insightfully than recent accounts of their shared organic 'conception of nature and life' have implied."[8] Thus the *Starry Night* town is a representation of Whitman's "dead-house" in "The City Dead-House" (and of Whitman's "recurrent image" of "rejection of indoor life" in "Song of Myself" and elsewhere). Schwind argues that the contrast between "the carefully delimited and constricted rectangles of light in the village" portrayed with "rigidly straight lines and dark shadows" and "the vigorous curves in primary colors of the landscape that surrounds it" is Van Gogh's effort to depict Whitman's poetic imagery. She bases this argument on the "preliminary studies for 'Starry Night' [that] show the St. Rémy landscape as it appears from Van Gogh's hospital window, townless and without cypress" (6).

In *Van Gogh: The Life*, Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith give a detailed account of the painter's time spent in the asylum of Saint-Paul-de-Mausole in St. Rémy. Due to the constraints imposed on Van Gogh concerning his condition, he was not allowed to "venture out after dark to paint," Naifesh and Smith report, and, in order to

paint a starry night, "he could only watch from behind the bars of his bedroom window as the asylum lights blinked off, the sky darkened, and the stars assembled."[9] Although his access to the nighttime view was limited, he was allowed to venture out in daytime. In early June 1888, Van Gogh took "a day trip into the town of Saint-Rémy, about a mile downhill from the asylum gates." It was "on this visit, or on one of his other forays into the hills overlooking the town" that "he had made a careful sketch of the popular mountain resort, with its dense warren of medieval streets girdled by broad modern boulevards." After creating his night sky, Naifeh and Smith suggest, Van Gogh "added a sleeping village in the middle distance" in order to "ground his celestial vision." For the painting, he also "reduced the bustling town of six thousand to a sleepy village of no more than a few hundred souls." To complete his desired composition of the elements in the painting, "he moved the town from the valley floor north of the asylum and placed it to the east, directly between his bedroom window and the familiar serrated line of the Alpilles" (756-757).

In contrast to Schwind's assertion that "the town of 'Starry Night' is clearly fictive" despite Van Gogh's paintings seldom featuring "imaginative content" (6), Naifeh and Smith demonstrate that the town in the painting is not imaginary by recording Van Gogh's actual visit to the town on which it is based. The precise illustration of the town contrasts with the mesmerizing and mercurial movement of the circles in Van Gogh's sky. Naifeh and Smith trace how scientists discovered that, for patients suffering from epileptic seizures, "disruptions of perception, cognition, or emotion" would take place in an arbitrary manner (763): "Seizures could be triggered by visual stimuli as varied as sunlight dappling through leaves, [or] fluttering of the eyelids." When Van Gogh encountered "an early wakening or a sleepless night," he "stared and stared at the light [the stars] each shone, and the sparkling darkness around them" (760). If we combine the scientific finding of the trigger for seizures and the painter's nocturnal routines, we realize that the starry night sky in the painting might well be a microcosm of the "storms" (762) in his brain since, as Naifeh and Smith argue, the "euphoric image of swirling, unhinged cosmos signaled that his defense had been breached" (763). Considering this biographical

perspective, the town which Schwind interprets as the "dead-house" should instead be viewed as a contained space of sanity enclosed by the unpredictable and explosive "bolts of neuronal 'lightning'" (763) inside Van Gogh's brain. The juxtaposition of the well-delineated town and the ubiquitous, spiral circles reveals the painter's fear of and conflicted desire for contact with people (the more contact he has with them, the more readily he would suffer an attack) and his longing to become part of the all-encompassing Nature where he would not be ostracized as a mad person. Following his relocation to the asylum, he found himself attracted to and comforted by nature. Prior to painting *Starry Night*, he was engaged in drawing lilies, whose color was of his "new serenity," and he claimed that he preferred "to go out and look at a blade of grass, the branch of a fir tree, an ear of wheat, in order to calm down" (Naifeh and Smith, 755). Therefore, it is not overreaching to interpret the stars, the night sky, and the earth in *Starry Night* as manifestations of Van Gogh's mental state and the distant town as the raw reality independent from his realm of ideality.

To investigate the relationship between Whitman and Van Gogh merely by focusing on their artistic renderings, then, is insufficient. This is clearly the view of Hope B. Werness, who examines both artists' perception of stars in relation to their respective philosophies of life and death. She quotes Mark Van Doren's well-known diagnosis of Whitman's "erethism," a term that describes "persons whose organs and tissues are chronically in a state of abnormal excitement, who tremble and quiver when the rest of us are merely conscious that we are being interested or pleased."[10] Because of their shared extraordinarily emotional intensity, Werness suggests that both Whitman's and Van Gogh's artistic expressiveness originate from their "cosmic consciousness," which is "most evident in their poetic and painted visions of the night sky" (36). She states that Van Gogh believes that "the immutable cycling of the stars in their courses and the phases of the moon intimated immortality" (37). Van Gogh's conception of life and death defies the conventional notion that life is linear and leads to death; instead, he speculates that "life too," just like earth, "is probably round."[11] In a letter written to his brother, Van Gogh expresses views on death as a vehicle that transports the dead to the

celestial realm:

> Just as we take the train to Tarascon or Rouen, we take death to reach a star. One thing undoubtedly true in this reasoning is that we cannot get to a star while we are alive, any more than we can take the train when we are dead.[12]

Van Gogh's view of death as the beginning of life in another form corresponds to Whitman's beliefs as expressed throughout his poetry, as in the image of grass as "the uncut hair of graves" in "Song of Myself" (*Poetry and Prose*, 193). Werness also points out that Whitman, like Van Gogh, associates the stars with "death and immortality" (38). She quotes the passage in "Death of Thomas Carlyle" in Whitman's *Specimen Days* to exemplify how the stars provide "answers to profound questions of life and death" for the poet:

> While through the whole of this silent indescribable show, inclosing and bathing my whole receptivity, ran the thought of Carlyle dying. (To soothe and spiritualize, and, as far as may be, solve the mysteries of death and genius, consider them under the stars at midnight). […] With me, too, when depress'd by some specially sad event, or tearing problem, I wait till I go out under the stars for the last voiceless satisfaction. (*Poetry and Prose*, 889)

Interestingly, Whitman, as a poet known for his harnessing of oratorical power, arrives at a kind of "voiceless satisfaction" through meditating on Carlyle's death while under the stars. For both Whitman and Van Gogh, death serves as an agency that is able to transfer them from earthly existence to a celestial one. The actual stars in the night sky, evidently, joined the two artists across the Atlantic Ocean.

2

These two artists' similarities are not limited to their individual portrayal of the stars in their artwork. They share something more interior: a private conception of the journey of life concealed behind the celestial manifestation on the canvas and in *Leaves*. Nature seemingly imparts knowledge of divinity to both artists, and their pursuit of this divinity can be illustrated in their shared admiration for the French painter Jean-François Millet (1814-1875). In *With Walt Whitman in*

Camden, Horace Traubel records Whitman's respect for Millet:

> Yes, there's Millet—he's a whole religion in himself: the best of democracy, the best of all well-bottomed faith, is in his pictures. The man who knows his Millet needs no creed.[13]

Whitman recognizes and praises the self-made divinity in Millet's art, a disposition which he endeavored to possess in his own poetic career. Certainly, his endeavor had already been acknowledged and his poetic achievement accredited in his life. When he reflected on Millet's accomplishment, he said, "The thing that first and always interested me in Millet's pictures was the untold something behind all that was depicted—an essence, a suggestion, an indirection, leading off into the immortal mysteries." Traubel responded, "I have often explained my adhesion to you in almost the same words" (2:407).

Whitman expressed his ultimate appreciation for Millet as a self-contained man who attained transcendence free from religious doctrine. During a visit with his friend Thomas Harned, Whitman even compared his *Leaves of Grass* with Millet's art:

> Harned interjected this question: "If Millet is enough and to spare what's the use of Leaves of Grass?" "That's what I say," replied W.: "If I had stopped to ask what's the use I never would have written the Leaves: who knows, Millet would not have painted pictures! The Leaves are really only Millet in another form—they are the Millet that Walt Whitman has succeeded in putting into words." (Traubel, 1:7)

Millet's artwork can thus be seen as a gift circulated to Whitman and an inspiration to his poetic creation. To Whitman, Millet's art is the embodiment of his divine force and spirit, since "he's a whole religion in himself." Therefore, Millet can be viewed as the original donor of the gift that possesses what Marcel Mauss calls "the *hau*, the spirit of things."[14] His *spirit* gives birth to his painting that then finds its spiritual counterpart in Whitman's poems, which are the *things* that have their origins in the *hau*, as the poet himself indicates in the passage quoted above.

Whitman writes in "Millet's Pictures—Last Items," that he had seen three copies of *The Sower* and felt that "the first sower" remained

the best of all and had "doubt" whether "the artist […] improved in each" (*Poetry and Prose*, 903). He was most impressed by the earliest version because "there is something in this that could hardly be caught again—a sublime murkiness and original pent fury." The passing of the gift, which initially takes place within the painter's private sphere from one version of the painting to increasingly paler versions, also occurs in a public domain, between Millet, Whitman, and Van Gogh.

Van Gogh, who professed great reverence for Millet from the beginning of his career in painting, is included in this gift-exchange circle initiated by Millet. During his stay in the asylum, Van Gogh "began where his artistic journey had begun: with Millet" (Naifeh and Smith, 779). Van Gogh expressed in his letters that Millet was "the archetype of the believer" and an artist whose painting had "evangelical" quality and who "'painted the doctrine of Christ without painting overtly biblical pictures."[14] He produced a series of copies of *The Sower* because copying Millet's paintings gave him "consolation" when he was ill and felt that "only a fantasy of fraternal reunion could save him." As Naifeh and Smith point out, these "endless reworkings of Millet were just the most visible part of that fantasy" (781). The fraternal feeling that Van Gogh wished to obtain from Millet by copying his paintings can be interpreted as Van Gogh's incessant artistic attempts to return the *hau* to Millet. Van Gogh has fulfilled his obligation to receive Millet's gift by modifying his copies in different versions, which symbolize the residual effect of Millet's gift of art in his paintings. His production of the copies is an act of securing the return of the *hau* to its original donor and of enabling the traveling of the *hau* to other receivers through his own artistic gift-giving in his paintings.

The spread of the seeds of Millet's sower does not cease there. Whitman's and Van Gogh's shared respect for Millet bring them into the same gift circle, within which the gift-exchange process also occurs between Whitman and Van Gogh. Whitman's declared admiration for Millet in 1888 and Van Gogh's copying of Millet's paintings in 1889, after professing his respect for the painter in the 1870s, enhance the connection between the two artists. Their joint tribute to Millet's art could be construed as an artistic reflection on their separate personal

lives. Van Gogh's use of Whitman's cluster title, "From Noon to Starry Night," to name his own *Starry Night* is not accidental, then, and may have entailed a more private reason that criticism has not yet touched upon.

Shortly after he admitted himself to the asylum in 1889, Van Gogh was diagnosed as having "mental epilepsy," which, as Naifeh and Smith note, is a latent kind of intellectual and emotional disease with which the victim could lead "a relatively normal life" (750). This "hidden" disease had tortured Van Gogh for a number of years, resulting in constant frustration over his inability to take part in "normal life" (751). Naifeh and Smith describe in detail the victim's experience of the seizure:

> When attacks came, they were often accompanied by out-of-body sensations, as if the victim's psyche were divided or projected into other entities—entities that sometimes spoke with their own voices. Victims would babble gibberish and act "automatically"—without conscious control, or even recognition, of their actions. This marked the beginning of the seizure itself—the most dangerous period, especially for the victim.

From Naifeh and Smith's perspective, this experience must have haunted Van Gogh, since "his fragile defenses . . . could barely withstand the threats that lurked everywhere in his own thoughts. Against the insults and indifference of the real world, they stood no chance at all" (767). Perhaps it is this sort of forced isolation from normative reality that further solidifies the connection between Van Gogh's and Whitman's personal experiences beyond their shared artistic inspiration.

When Van Gogh read Whitman's "From Noon to Starry Night," his terror of epileptic fits found its counterpart in Whitman's imagery of the "epileptic," which likely emerged from his witnessing his brother Eddy's epileptic condition. According to Loving, "Whitman had always been the most tolerant of Edward" and "often worried about the possibility of his dying before Edward.[15] In "Faces," the second poem in the "From Noon to Starry Night" cluster, Whitman depicts the bodily struggle and mental suffering resulting from an epileptic attack:

This face is an epilepsy, its wordless tongue gives out the unearthly cry,
Its veins down the neck distend, its eyes roll till they show nothing but their whites,
Its teeth grit, the palms of the hands are cut by the turn'd-in nails,
The man falls struggling and foaming to the ground, while he speculates well. . . . (*Poetry and Prose*, 577)

Whitman is not simply an observer when the epileptic's attack takes place. His well-known empathetic abilities allow him to experience the terror, and the distorted face seems to generate other broken faces throughout the following lines in the poem, including "the face of the most smear'd and slobbering idiot they had at the asylum," who the speaker of the poem identifies as "my brother," who is "emptied and broke[n]" by the "agents" who see him as noting but "rubbish." Just as epileptic seizures divide the personality and fracture the sense of self, Whitman has the broken faces of Edward appear in multiple manifestations in this poem. Whitman is able to comprehend the source of the "vermin and worms" that distort the face of his "brother." In addition, his insightful understanding about the epileptic attack is demonstrated when he speaks of how the man "speculates well," showing that Whitman is aware that during the epileptic seizure, the victim has a divided self that is independent from the suffering half and that perceives the entire process. His presentation of this part of epileptic experience especially would have corresponded to Van Gogh's own recollection of his attacks.

Unlike Whitman's description of an epileptic "struggling and foaming on the ground," Van Gogh's epilepsy was of an internalized form, completely imperceptible to anyone but himself at the moment when an attack took place. His physician could not tell the symptoms until the residual condition was revealed after the attack. Therefore, Van Gogh was the observer in the haunting progression towards the attack and also the sufferer of it. I wish to extend Whitman's and Van Gogh's shared comprehension of the disease of epilepsy, then, to the assumption that Van Gogh, when reading Whitman's "From Noon to Starry Night" cluster, would have recognized the description of epilepsy in "Faces." This discovery could well have foregrounded Van Gogh's admiration for Whitman's poetic language and force. In

1888, Whitman described his brother as someone "who has lived in darkness, eclipsed almost from the start" (Traubel, 2:57). Van Gogh did not have to know anything about Whitman's brother Eddy, but he would have identified with the epileptic in the poem and with the broken face that seems to fracture throughout the poem into multiple faces.

The darkness that Whitman imagines his brother is forced to dwell in, then, is mirrored in Van Gogh's *Starry Night*, in which the canvas is predominantly covered by the darkness of the night sky with stars that symbolize the painter's "euphoric image of swirling," an indicator of his epileptic state. Furthermore, in that sky is a mysterious image of either a bright crescent moon with an aurora of light or an image of an impossible solar eclipse where a crescent moon seems to pass between the sun and the earth. This odd and paradoxical image might have emerged from Van Gogh's reading of the first poem in the "From Noon to Starry Night" cluster, the poem that immediately precedes "Faces": "Thou Orb Aloft Full-Dazzling." This paean to the sun has a surprising ending, as the twenty-two lines of celebration of the sun's "sheeny light" and "fructifying heat and light" give way to a sudden tonal shift in the poem's final three lines:

> Nor only launch thy subtle dazzle and thy strength for these [poetic lines],
> Prepare the later afternoon of me myself—prepare my lengthening shadows,
> Prepare my starry nights. (*Poetry and Prose*, 463)

Van Gogh's own "full-dazzling" orb appears in a starry night sky, seemingly partially eclipsed, just as Whitman's opening poem in the poetic cluster that gave *Starry Night* its name enacts its own partial eclipse of the very sun it celebrates.

In the painting, the moon is not full and cannot obscure the entire sun. It is as if Van Gogh painted an inscrutable image that perhaps served as the sign of his own resistance of the blackout of his consciousness during epileptic episodes. Van Gogh, of course, could not have read Traubel's records of Whitman's comments (*With Walt Whitman in Camden* did not begin to be published until 1906). Nonetheless, epilepsy, as a disease that momentarily disrupts a sense

of normalcy, served as a catalyst for both the poet's and the painter's representation of darkness—the night sky. The surprising power of the epileptic spirit has travelled, in a manner of Mauss's gifting, from Whitman's "Faces" in "From Noon to Starry Night" to the *Starry Night* in Saint Rémy.

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NOTES

1 Walt Whitman, "Faces," in *Poetry and Prose*, ed. Justin Kaplan (New York: Library of America, 1996), 120.

2 Jerome M. Loving, ed., "Introduction," *The Civil War Letters of George Washington Whitman* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1975), 16. Edward Whitman suffered from a number of physical and mental ailments, and epilepsy is usually identified as one of them; see, for example, Randall Waldron's entry on Edward in J. R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings, eds., *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland, 1998), 776.

3 Vincent Van Gogh, *The Complete Letters of Vincent Van Gogh*, 3 vols. (Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1959), 3:445 (W8).

4 Lewis M. Layman, "Echoes of Walt Whitman's 'Bare-Bosom'd Night' in Van Gogh's 'Starry Night,'" *American Notes & Queries* 22 (March/April I1984), 105-109. See 107.

5 Roger T. Ames, "Taoism and The Androgynous Ideal," *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 8.3 (1981), 21-45. See 43-44.

6 Harry Eiss, *Christ of the Coal Yards: A Critical Biography of Vincent van Gogh* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2010), 245-247.

7 "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," Section 9, in *Poetry and Prose*, 312.

8 Jean Schwind. "Van Gogh's 'Starry Night' and Whitman: A Study in Source," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 3 (Summer (1985), 1-15. See 5.

9 Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith, *Van Gogh: The Life* (New York: Random House, 2011), 760.

10 Hope B. Werness, "Whitman and Van Gogh: Starry Nights and Other Similarities," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 2 (Spring 1985), 35.

11 Van Gogh, *Complete Letters*, 3:#B8.

12 Van Gogh, *Complete Letters*, 3:#506.

13 Horace Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, 1:7. Available on the *Walt Whitman Archive* (whitmanarchive.org).

14 Marcel Mauss. *The Gift*. Trans. W.D. Halls (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), 11.

15 Jerome Loving. "Introduction" from *The Civil War Letters of George Washington Whitman* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1975).

WALT WHITMAN: A CURRENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Blake, David Haven. "Performance and Celebrity." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 117-126. [Examines how "celebrity intersects with one of the most challenging ideals of American life: how the many can be represented in the one"; demonstrates how Whitman "understood the performative aspects of celebrity" and "championed the role that readers played in deciding what was important in their world"; offers an overview of "how artistic celebrity could work" in the antebellum United States, and looks at the various cultural forces that generated celebrity, from oratory and opera to photography and popular music, pointing out too "how deeply enmeshed poetry was in this emergent culture of celebrity," with Longfellow, Whittier, Poe, Lydia Sigourney, and Emerson as examples of poet-celebrities; considers how "Whitman periodically questioned whether the self could exist outside its communal display" and how he used "publicity stunts" to generate publicity for himself and his work.]

Blalock, Stephanie M. "Periodical Fiction." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 78-87. [Traces how, in the 1840s, Whitman "began building his literary reputation by writing periodical fiction" and examines his short fiction and the surprising number of times it was reprinted; discusses his two novels, written a decade apart, yet "both influenced by nineteenth-century popular fiction genres"; and argues that "if Whitman was known among national and international readers in the 1840s and early 1850s, it was likely as a writer of periodical fiction."]

Bohan, Ruth L. "Visual Arts and Photography." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 127-135. [Examines "Whitman's many friendships with artists and his scrutiny of a broad range of visual modes of representations," including photography, painting, sculpture, and book and magazine illustration; suggests how "Whitman's language reveals and reinforces his absorption in the visual arts culture" of his time; and looks at how Whitman in his last decade of life was the subject of paintings, photographs, and sculptures.]

Bradford, Adam. "Death and Mourning." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 287-296. [Offers an overview of "the psychology and social rituals of mourning" in the mid-nineteenth century in order to understand how "the power of the conventions surrounding death and mourning" were "central to [Whitman's] corpus of poetry"; traces how "Whitman's familiarity with these conventions" is apparent in much of his early, pre-*Leaves of Grass* work and goes on to show how he draws on this knowledge in *Leaves* itself to construct texts that become—in both representational and material ways—mourning objects, and how the poet reconfigures mourning conventions to become "powerful tools" in his work, especially in his Civil War writings, where he "hoped that fostering successful mourning for countless bereaved individuals would also help heal the ongoing division of the national social body."]

Bradford, Adam. Review of Lindsay Tuggle, *The Afterlives of Specimens: Science, Mourning, and Whitman's Civil War. Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 36 (Summer 2018), 78-85.

Bromwich, David. "Whitman's Assumptions: 'Song of Myself' in *Leaves of Grass*, Walt Whitman." *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 85 (Fall 2018), 503-519. [Offers an extended reading of "Song of Myself," examining the poem's "distinct modalities," including "invitation, characterization, catalogue, prayer, and rhapsody or sheer exclamation"; explores Whitman's "ethic of 'acceptance'"; and sees "the entire poem . . . as an adventure of faith, a thrust and gamble of inventive energy untethered by prudence."]

Bronson-Bartlett, Blake. "From Loose Leaves to Readymades: Manuscript Books in the Age of Emerson and Whitman." *J19* 6 (Fall 2018), 259-283. [Argues that "the increasing availability of readymade manuscript books by midcentury . . . yielded two strains of literary experimentation represented in Emerson's and Whitman's published works: respectively, one struggling to transcend a culture of mere readymades, the other open to the readymade as the medium of transcendence"; illustrates, through close work with Emerson's and Whitman's material notebooks, how "subtle shifts in the material culture of the period spurred new and differentiated forms of writing and thought," and proposes that "the production and marketing of manuscript books during the antebellum decades . . . introduced new conditions for the embodied practices of reading and writing that gave us Emerson, Whitman, and the variations of philosophical and poetic exper-

imentalism we know as transcendentalism."]

Bronson-Bartlett, Blake. Review of Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Whitman Among the Bohemians*. *Resources for American Literary Study* 39 (2017), 349-354.

Buinicki, Martin T. "Reconstruction." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 278-286. [Offers an overview of Whitman's life and views during the Reconstruction period, noting how "his employment in Washington, DC, provid[ed] a unique vantage point from which to observe the nation grappling with the difficult work of reconstruction," including the troubling issue of race, which Whitman both approaches and avoids in the "dizzying catalog of volumes" he publishes during "the tumultuous post-war years," when the poet undergoes an odd "turn away from politics."]

Buinicki, Martin T. Review of Matt Cohen, *Whitman's Drift*. *ALH Online Review* Series 17 (December 4, 2018).

Cohen, Matt. "The American South." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 48-56. [Analyzes how "Whitman's writing was shaped profoundly by the American South as both idea and reality," and how he set out "not just to embrace a range of Southern identities but to embody them poetically"; offers an overview of the poet's 1848 stay in New Orleans, examines how "his lifelong doubts about social equality among races and black suffrage . . . put him on a sympathetic footing with white Southerners," and how his relationship with former Confederate soldier Peter Doyle and his care of Confederate soldiers in Washington DC's wartime hospitals were "transformative for his perspective on the South"; and shows how Whitman's writing was read and responded to in the South, in sometimes surprising ways, as in the case of his "long-term friendship with . . . John Newton Johnson, a former slaveowner and Confederate veteran" from rural Alabama.]

Cohen, Michael C. Review of Matt Cohen, *Whitman's Drift*. *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 73 (June 2018), 127-130.

Cohen, Michael C. "Verse Forms." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 59-67. [Explores "Whitman's deep investment in questions of verse form" and looks at "the utopian horizon that Whitman's understanding of 'form' makes visible in his poetics," as "his poetry seeks to reintegrate aesthetic

and ethical practice," and the "free growth of its formalism seeks as its end worldly, which is to say bodily, happiness."]

Collins, Father Michael, with Alexandra Block, Thomas Cussons, John Fandon, and Philip Parker. *Remarkable Books: A Celebration of the World's Most Beautiful and Historic Works*. New York: DK, 2017. [Examines, illustrates, and offers a guide to more than eighty of the "world's most celebrated, rare, and important written works," including *Leaves of Grass* (92-94).]

Coviello, Peter. "Civil War." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 269-277. [Argues that "Whitman's writing in the Civil War shuttles between . . . two great crises: crises in how the nation came to represent itself, to itself, and crises in the meaning and parameters of gender and sex," shattering the poet's "early-career expressivist utopianism" but simultaneously furnishing "a strange kind of replenishment along the way" having to do with "unexpended possibilities of sex" that presented themselves to him not just in his writing but in his actual experience: "In the war, Whitman himself circulates not in the form of his printed book but *in person*, bed by bed by bed, offering an affection to the ranks of wounded soldiers he finds in hospitals," as the war "*replenishes* Whitman's sense of desire as the cohering element of national life and his vision of sex itself . . . as the great force capable of forging a public, a citizenship, a nation."]

Cuomo, Alessio, Director. "Ode to the Journey." *Wideoyster* no. 3 (2018), wideoyster.nl/magazine3-eng/new-york-city. [Short film about New York City, with voiceover of the second section of Whitman's "Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun," narrated here by Eric Forsythe.]

Cutler, Edward S. "Romanticism." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 327-336. [Argues that *Leaves of Grass*, especially the first three editions, "exemplifies that spirit of a comparatively minor but radically innovative strain of romantic philosophy that flashed up in Jena, Germany, during the closing years of the eighteenth century," "an aesthetic mode that sought to fuse poetry and philosophy," one that "would find its fullest exemplar and a kindred spirit in Whitman, who late in life would even declare himself 'the greatest *poetical* representative of German philosophy,'" though he himself read no German; examines how Whitman became familiar with German philosophy, how he picked up German romanticism's "playful, often mystifying preference for paradox and self-negating irony" and "self-contradic-

tion"; tracks how Whitman follows Novalis in finding "the I and the Not-I are not opposable, but co-extensive and complementary aspects of an incommensurable, groundless absolute that offers no sure footing," and how he follows Fichte in deciding to "open every circuit, including the special case of transcendental self-identity, in favor of an infinite, free activity," because "Whitman's provocations are not leads toward systemic or doctrinal certitude; they circle the paradox of the whole, which the I and you share on equal terms"; concludes by viewing how Whitman's construction of *Leaves* "intuited the broader conceptual energy of early German romanticism regarding a new, absolute book."

DeSpain, Jessica. "Transatlantic Book Distribution." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 177-186. [Examines the history of British distribution and publication of Whitman's work, noting how over the course of his career we can trace "a positive shift in British perception of the poet because of editorial interventions," including those by William Michael Rossetti, Ernest Rhys, and James Camden Hotten; looks at how "Whitman capitalized upon his British reception as another means to expand notice of his work; the negative reviews stirred literary nationalism whereas the positive reviews gave him literary cachet both at home and abroad."]

Dowling, David O. "The Literary Marketplace." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 167-176. [Notes how "Whitman vigorously adapted to the increasingly commercial terrain of the antebellum literary marketplace that transformed authorship into a competitive free market scramble" and offers "an overview of the literary marketplace Whitman encountered during his career"; ends by looking at Whitman's "personal and professional relationship with Fanny Fern" as a "case study of his adaptation" to the changing literary market, including his "self-promotion" and "his belief that the periodical press could carry the message of his broader democratic vision."]

Downs, Maggie. "Mariah Carey's 'All I Want for Christmas' as Written by Walt Whitman." *McSweeney's* (December 12, 2018), mcsweeneys.net. [Song lyrics rewritten as a Whitman poem, beginning "I do not want much this Christmas time / There is but one thing I need. / It is not a gift that can be placed beneath the holiday tree, / The house is fill'd with merriment, I breathe the fragrance of the festivities, / I invite my soul to celebrate . . ." and ending "B'cause baby, all I want for Christmas is me!"]

Dressman, Michael. "Living the Myth: The Authorial Life of Walt Whitman." In Edmund P. Cueva and Deborah Beam Shelley, eds., *Lessons in Mythology: A Comparative Approach* (Newcastle upon Tyne, U.K.: Cambridge Scholars, 2017), 89-103. [Offers an overview of "building the legend and, eventually, the myth of Walt Whitman," including the poet's reading of and use of Emerson's works, his self-marketing, his hospital work in Washington DC during the Civil War, William Douglas O'Connor's writings about Whitman, and the "special knack of the poet to reach his reader and identify with that reader, to explain the world and its workings in personal terms—this is what has cemented the myth of Walt Whitman."]

Drew, Wayne Adrian. *Song of Myself*. London: Bedfords Publications, 2019. [One-act monologue, in which Whitman speaks about his life and reads from his works; premiered in London, England, on the 200th anniversary of Whitman's birth, in the Orangery of the Fan Museum in Greenwich; starring Peter Barrow as Whitman.]

Dudding, Will. "When Walt Whitman Reported for the *New York Times*." *New York Times* (October 22, 2018). [Discusses the Civil War articles that Whitman wrote as a freelance journalist living in Washington, D.C., for the *New York Times*, when he "was piecing together a divided, changing nation."]

Eckel, Leslie Elizabeth. "Oratory." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 98-107. [Posits a "counter-narrative of Whitman's development as an orator"—"rooted in the 1850s" and reaching "its high point in the series of lectures on 'The Death of Abraham Lincoln' that Whitman performed at the end of his career"—revealing "a different story about his development as a cultural figure," a story in which "Whitman's poems could be read as a written record that he felt was complementary or even secondary to the live presence he intended to maintain before an eager American audience"; demonstrates Whitman's oratorical aspirations and argues that, while he finally "channeled his oratorical energies into his poems," he did manage through his Lincoln lectures "to master the art of performing before the captive audience of which he had always dreamed."]

Erickson, Paul. "Erotica." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 136-145. [Notes how Whitman, talking of his poetry, once said that "sex is the root of it all," and examines "what sorts of books about sex were available at the time that Whitman was writing and publishing," pointing out that "pornographic materials were widely available in antebellum cities"; demonstrates that "critics who called for *Leaves* to be prosecuted as obscene had a point, at least according to the standards that prevailed in antebellum New York."]

Fasman, Jon. "Out of Hopeful Green Stuff Woven: The Bicentenary of America's Homer." *The World in 2019* (London: The Economist Newspaper Ltd., 2018), 40-41. [Asks "What would America's greatest poet make of his country on his 200th birthday?" and suggests that what "would disturb Whitman more than anything else about his country's current condition" is that "Americans live in wholly separate political tribes that fear and loathe each other."]

Folsom, Ed. "'A yet more terrible and more deeply complicated problem': Walt Whitman, Race, Reconstruction, and American Democracy." *American Literary History* 30 (Fall 2018), 531-558. [Investigates Whitman's experiences in two cities—New Orleans in 1848 and Washington D.C. in the Reconstruction years—that had the most racially mixed populations of any cities in the nation and probes why the earlier experience led to the development of the absorptive and unifying democratic voice of his antebellum work, while the postbellum experience did not generate new imaginative work that absorbed African American citizens into his democratic embrace; goes on to deal with Whitman's Reconstruction writings, including *Democratic Vistas* and *Memoranda During the War*, and analyzes the surprising absence of the issue of race in those works, especially given his experience in Washington during the mayoralty of Sayles Jenks Bowen and his job as a copyist for Attorney General Amos T. Akerman, both of whom worked toward instituting a biracial democracy in the US; concludes by underscoring how Whitman, the writer most perfectly positioned to help the nation imagine its way to a biracial democracy, failed in the postbellum years to initiate the national imaginary that the postbellum US so desperately needed and continues to seek.]

Folsom, Ed. "Impact on the World." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 383-392. [Examines the phenomenon of "talking back to Whitman by an international group of poets . . . as his influence has extended far and wide, not only across race and social class and ethnicity and poetic style but across nationalities, languages, and continents"; investigates an "unavoidable paradox" in viewing Whitman's work in an international context—"the poet who celebrates diversity, multiple identities, and democratic tolerance can sometimes seem dangerously and globally hegemonic," leading to "a dual tradition in absorbing Whitman": "He enters most cultures as both invader and immigrant, as the confident, pushy, overwhelming representative of his nation, as the large and inscrutable voice of the United States; *and* as the intimate, inviting, submissive, always malleable immigrant, whose work gets absorbed and rewritten in always surprising ways"; concludes by tracing the history of commentary on Whitman's impact on other cultures, and looks at how translations of Whitman's work are significant for demonstrating how "Whitman alters the language that he disappears into at precisely the moment he magically appears anew in it; the new language alters Whitman as much as he alters it."]

Folsom, Ed. "Walt Whitman: A Current Bibliography." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 36 (Summer 2018), 86-94.

Fomeshi, Behnam M. "'Something Foreign in It': A Study of an Iranian Translation of Whitman's Image." *Transfer* 14 (2019), 49-72. [Uses photographs and engravings of Whitman and photographs and paintings of Iranian poets to demonstrate "Whitman's reception in relation to the common image of the poet in contemporary Iran," and does so by looking closely at the cover photograph of "a recent book-length Persian translation of Whitman published in Iran" (Mohsen Towhidian's 2011 *Man Walt Whitmanam*); argues that "images of the younger, more casual and rebellious Whitman have found their place in the minds of his Western readers, but that aspect of his image does not register for his Persian audience," who "favor the one that looks the oldest and possesses special qualities significant to the Persian image in which a significant, wise poet must always be old"; offers illustrations to demonstrate the ways that images of the older Whitman "take on the aspect of a prophet and look similar to major Persian poets, including Sa'di, Hafiz, and Rumi."]

Garrop, Stacy. "Terra Nostra: An Oratorio." King of Prussia, PA: Theodore Presser Co., 2016. [Includes five musical settings of Whitman's poetry, for baritone, soprano, children's choir, and chorus—"Smile O voluptuous cool-breath'd earth!," "A Blade of Grass," "A Child said, What is the grass?," "There was a child went forth every day," and "A Blade of Grass / I bequeath myself."]

Gerhardt, Christine. "The Natural World." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 337-346. [Explores the ways that Whitman's poetry "embraced plants and animals, places and planets, and geographical and geological phenomena not only as tropes but also as parts of interconnected, living systems," and "in doing so . . . responded to a range of nineteenth-century environmental discourses that marked the beginning of a modern ecological consciousness in the US"—"and he did so without categorically separating the human from the nonhuman, natural from built environments, or nature from culture"; finds that Whitman, in creating his "ecopoetics," learned from "the proto-ecological sciences, emerging conservationist arguments, and popular nature essays" in building his "differentiated ecopoetics of attentiveness, and even care, that sidesteps claims to nature's knowability and expressions of a normative ethics," a poetics that allowed him to "face the alterity and ineffability of the non-human world."]

Gray, Nicole. "Bookmaking." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 156-166. [Examines how "Whitman's involvement in the making of his books has become a focal point in scholarship in the past decade" and examines how he became "a controlling force in the making of his books, involved at every point in the process, from design to printing, binding, and distribution," producing throughout his life a remarkable series of unique material objects, "small batches of singular books."]

Grossman, Jay. "Sexuality." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 227-238. [Demonstrates how "Whitman shifted the landscape of what it is possible to express in poetic language by insisting upon the poetic value and validity of the sexual and embodied aspects of the American experience not previously treated in verse," reflecting the way "Whitman's life coincides with the century that saw significant changes in the ways sex, desire, and sexuality were understood, conceptualized, and lived," so that his life and

work become "an exquisitely precise barometer for reckoning changes in the ways in which sex and [the] new category of sexual identify have been understood"; concludes by examining how Whitman "placed his sexual and affectionate attraction to men at the very center of his poetry and his political hopes for the nation."]

Grünzweig, Walter. "Imperialism and Globalization." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 249-258. [Examines how "contemporary geopolitical realities have variously highlighted the dual meanings of Whitman's orientation toward the world, drawing critical attention both to his cosmopolitan, international inclusiveness and to his more troubling commitment to such ethnographic ideologies as manifest destiny"; reads key Whitman poems to show how Whitman casts globalization in both positive and negative ways.]

Harrison, Joseph. "Seven New Poems by Walt Whitman." *American Scholar* (Winter 2019), 55-58. [Seven poems, written in Whitman's voice speaking from beyond death, now living only in his poems: "Sometimes I Dream That I Am Not Walt Whitman" (55), "Let Them Say Whatever They Want" (55), "Returning to the Sea-Shore" (55), "I Hear It Is Charged Against Me" (56), "Like a Ghost I Returned" (56), "Some Tuesdays I Go to Lisbon" (57), "My Old Camerado, My Body" (58).]

Holt, Tim. "Walking with Walt." 2018. [Drama about a character named Sam Marler who journeys across the U.S. with Whitman in 1890; premiered in September 2018 in the Kenneth W. Ford Theater at the College of the Siskiyous, California; with Tim Holt as Whitman and Nic Fabrio as Sam Marler.]

Hornby, Stephen M. *The Adhesion of Love*. 2019. [Drama about John W. Wallace's visit to Whitman in Camden, New Jersey, in 1891, where the disciple from Bolton, England, confronts the true nature of the male-male intimacy that the Bolton disciples were seeking; premiered by Inkbrew Productions at the Burnley (England) Central Library on February 9, 2019.]

Jaussen, Paul. *Writing in Real Time: Emergent Poetics from Whitman to the Digital*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017. [Chapter 2, "Emergent America: Walt Whitman's Enactive Democracy" (39-66), examines how *Leaves of Grass*, over the course of Whitman's career, "responds to changes in its environment" and analyzes "the poetics of this adaptability"; suggests

how "Whitman's use of the bound volume, poetic cluster, or individual 'leaf' functions as a mode of provisional closure, producing a formal space whose boundaries are constantly being negotiated and expanded in response to historical events like the Civil War," creating a "profoundly iterative and recursive" "poetic system," so that *Leaves* "repeats itself in order to register changes in the world" and becomes "an aesthetic correlative to Whitmanian democracy, a politics and poetics always to come."]

Jordan, Tina. "When Walt Whitman Was Dying, It Was Front-Page News—for Months." *New York Times* (December 18, 2018), nytimes.com. [Chronicles the *New York Times* coverage of Whitman's final illness and death, from December 18, 1891, to a report on March 30, 1892, of the poet's interment at Camden's Harleigh Cemetery.]

Karbiener, Karen. "Brooklyn and Manhattan." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 15-26. [Examines how "Brooklyn provided the bedrock and materials for Whitman's literary experiments," while "Manhattan was their inspiration," serving as "a perfect model for *Leaves of Grass*."]

Larson, Kerry. "Politics." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 239-248. [Examines "what it means to speak of a political vision in *Leaves of Grass*" and looks to the ways that the "interpenetration of praise and the political is [important] to Whitman," posing a particularly tough "set of challenges for his interpreter"; tracks ways that commentators have arrived at contradictory claims about the poet's political vision and argues that "the self-proclaimed 'poet of democracy' may be better described as a poet of anarchy," whose "impartial love radiates a heartless compassion: non-human, irresistible, and unanswerable"; proposes that in Whitman's work, "detachment and connectedness are two sides of the same coin: to be receptive to all aspects of the given world is necessarily to be removed from them," leaving us afloat in "the paradox of detachment and connectedness, . . . the tension between praise and politics"; concludes with the suggestion that, "absurd as it is to call Whitman's poetry apolitical, it is not entirely accurate . . . to call it political either."]

Levin, Joanna, and Edward Whitley. "Bohemianism." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 208-217. [Examines how "Whitman affiliated himself with the bohemians from 1859 to 1862, embracing their milieu—espe-

cially their nightly haunt, Pfaff's basement beer cellar at 647 Broadway—as a vital new context in which to reshape his ever-evolving persona and expanding *Leaves of Grass*," and traces his relationship with the "Pfaffians" like Henry Clapp and Ada Clare, as well as with the poet's own intimate male comrades who frequented the bar, like Fred Vaughan and the members of the "Fred Grey Association."]

Levin, Joanna, and Edward Whitley, eds. *Walt Whitman in Context*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018. [Collection of thirty-eight original essays by various scholars (each listed separately in this bibliography), divided into four groups: Locations; Literary and Artistic Contexts; Cultural and Political Contexts; and Reception and Legacy; with a preface (xix-xxiv) by Levin and Whitley, and a list of "further reading" for each topic (393-410).]

Loving, Jerome. "The Rank and File." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 316-326. [Investigates the different and often contradictory ways Whitman looked at "labor in the nineteenth century," celebrating the artisan worker before the Civil War, generally remaining silent about the major labor strikes in postbellum America, worrying about labor's growing "socialist attachments," and writing positively of "gilded age millionaires" like Andrew Carnegie and George Peabody; argues that "Whitman's attention to labor was strongest before the war possibly because slavery, and its extension to the western states, threatened to turn artisanal value into market value and wage-work into wage slavery"; concludes that "the poet's shift from 'A Song of Occupations' to 'Song of the Exposition' did not involve a change of attitude toward the threat of labor, only a growing regard for the captains of the emerging technologies that would change and devalue work in ways Whitman simply failed to imagine."]

Mack, Stephen John. "Philosophy." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 198-207. [Argues that Whitman is a philosopher in that "he does have a 'system' that is both coherent and comprehensive," that he is in fact "a philosopher of democracy" who "systematizes democracy, contextualizing its essential but narrowly scoped political arrangements within a broader, *organic* system of interlocking psychological, cultural, economic, and spiritual prescriptions—imperatives that he views as the logical and *natural* extrapolations of democratic political practices"; goes on to propose that "Whitman grounds his philosophy of *organic democracy* in a materialist

metaphysics; but the pragmatic import of that philosophy is ethical in that it strives to temper the often illiberal impulses latent in both raw populism and unrestrained capitalism by subordinating them to the critical pressures of a utopian democratic tradition"; examines the influences on Whitman's philosophy, including Jeffersonian "rationalist 'Enlightenment' ideals," "British and German romanticism," and "an eclectic mix of sources that not only included philosophical statements but an extraordinary range of other materials gathered from religion, popular culture, science, imaginative literature, and politics as well," all resulting in Whitman's unique philosophy that viewed "democracy [as] the central fact of all existence."]

Marchant, Fred. "Walt Whitman's House: Camden." *Radical Teacher* [Brooklyn, NY] no. 111 (Summer 2018), 48. [Poem, beginning "His last one, two floors, two granite slabs for his doorstep, empty lots and snowy vastness surrounding, rows of row-houses torn down."]

McGill, Meredith. Review of Matt Cohen, *Whitman's Drift*. *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 36 (Summer 2018), 72-77.

Miller, Matt. "Notebooks and Manuscripts." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 146-155. [Traces the fate of Whitman's many notebooks and manuscripts, from their being dispersed before and after his death and ending up in many repositories, through recent efforts to gather all this material in one place, as on the online *Walt Whitman Archive*; notes the "prospects . . . for new discoveries and revolutionary readings" that the notebooks and manuscripts now provide.]

Milo [Rory Ferreira]. *budding ornithologists are weary of tired analogies*. San Franciso, CA: Bandcamp, 2018. [Rap album, containing "sansoucci palace (4 years later)," which ends with Milo rapping lines from Whitman's "Whoever You Are Holding Me Now in Hand."]

Mullaney, Clare Renee. "American Imprints: Disability and the Material Text, 1861-1927." Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2018. [Examines the "rise in disabled populations" in the nineteenth century and how American writers worked "to convey disability on the page"; one chapter deals with Whitman's Civil War writings; *DAI*-A 80/02(E), *Dissertations Abstracts International*.]

Mullins, Maire. "Gender." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 218-226. [Examines how Whitman's writings "craft[ed] gender constructions that both reinforced and undercut the mid-nineteenth-century cultural mainstream, . . . anticipat[ing] the work of historians, sociologists, psychologists, and literary theorists in the field of gender studies," and demonstrates how he recognized "that gender is a fluid construct" as he "hoped to transform the societal and cultural understanding of gender."]

O'Neill, Bonnie Carr. *Literary Celebrity and Public Life in the Nineteenth-Century United States*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2017. [Chapter 2, "Walt Whitman: Mediation, Affect, and Authority in Celebrity Culture" (51-86), examines Whitman in the contexts of publicity practices and nineteenth-century celebrity culture; examines Whitman's 1840s *Aurora* journalism and looks at how that work "instilled in him a keen sense of publicity," as his "combative persona" in his journalism "gives way to the compassionate one he uses in his poetry"; reads "Calamus" as an example of his "affective response to his own persona and his work" and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" as an example of "what happens to public affect when its object is no longer present in the public sphere"; examines how "Whitman puts his own image before his readers in the effort to make himself the object of readers' desire"; and concludes that these moments in Whitman's career reveal his "investment in and critical response to celebrity culture and the personalization of public life" and show how his work "responds to the power of affect in a highly mediated popular culture."]

Pannapacker, William. "Camden and Philadelphia." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 27-36. [Examines Whitman's residency in Camden, New Jersey, from 1873 to his death in 1892, demonstrating how his move to the city was "born initially of personal tragedy and necessity," but how he nonetheless was able to "rebuild a life that was familiar to him" there and to make "many allies, even among the social elites" of nearby Philadelphia, where he became "one of the grand, old men of Philadelphia in ways that increasingly complicated his identification with the common American and standing as a literary outsider."]

Pöhlmann, Sascha. "Influence in the United States." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 374-382. [Argues that "perhaps no other American writer has worked so tirelessly and insistently on preparing his own reception and the poetic, social, and political influence he would have," a "self-reflexive, future-oriented framing" that is "a central part of his aesthetics"; goes on to examine Whitman's "absorption" into American culture and literature, an influence that turned out to be "very different both in quality and degree" than the poet imagined, as was the case with modernists like Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, and W. C. Williams, for whom "Whitman was as much a problem as a positive influence"; also examines the complex interaction with Whitman by Langston Hughes, Muriel Rukeyser, and Allen Ginsberg; concludes by noting that American poetry remains a "perpetual creative reengagement" with Whitman and his work.]

Price, Kenneth M. "Washington, DC." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 37-47. [Examines how Washington, DC, was "the location of the crucial mid-stage of Walt Whitman's career, 1863-73," and demonstrates how his "remarkable mid-career accomplishments . . . can be better understood when they are situated both temporally and geographically in the nation's capital during the 1860s and 1870s," where Whitman wrote and published his Civil War books, revised *Leaves of Grass*, worked at government jobs, visited thousands of sick and wounded soldiers in the hospitals, and experienced life in "governmental or quasi-governmental bureaucracies."]

Raz, Yosefa. "Untuning Walt Whitman's Prophetic Voice." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 36 (Summer 2018), 1-26. [Examines Whitman's "activation of a grand prophetic voice" in *Drum-Taps*, where he reads "the present through the past and connect[s] it to the future as an optimistic visionary enterprise; even amid the agonies of war, the speaker of the poem-cycle imagines himself 'as connector, as chansonnier of a great future'"; goes on to "explore the power and authority Whitman generates through the prophetic voice, especially in relation to war," and also examines "the fissures and weakness that underlie this use of prophecy"; the second part of the essay analyzes contemporary poet Rob Halpern's 2012 *Music for Porn*, which "echoes and critiques Whitman's *Drum-Taps*," reveals "the anxiety latent in Whitman's prophetic voice," and manifests "the kind of obsessive madness Whitman denied himself."]

Rebhorn, Matthew. Review of Lindsay Tuggle, *The Afterlives of Specimens: Science, Mourning, and Whitman's Civil War. ALH Online Review* Series 16 (September 5, 2018).

Riley, Peter. "'Wet Paper Between Us': Whitman and the Transformations of Labor." In Nicholas Coles and Paul Lauter, eds., *A History of American Working-Class Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 76-91. [Examines in detail "Whitman's engagement with the emerging world of work in the mid-nineteenth century," especially as he negotiated "the turbulent Brooklyn real estate market" in his role as a contractor; argues that Whitman's engagement is conflicted, both celebrating "a recognizable artisan ideal" that was "coded white and defined in opposition to the encroaching threat posed by slavery," even while he "was also scrupulously attuned to the stutterings of the accelerating New York economy, formulating his malleable poetic persona in relation to the necessities of making a living in turbulent times," part of the "'precariat,' an adaptive and potentially subversive alliance forced to live and work without stable occupational identity or protective labor legislation."]

Robbins, Timothy D. "A 'Reconstructed Sociology': *Democratic Vistas* and the American Social Science Movement." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 36 (Summer 2018), 27-71. [Offers a reading of *Democratic Vistas* as "a case study of early American social science" by "situating the text's composition . . . within the intellectual tendencies of Reconstruction-era social science," including the postbellum development of the American Social Science Association; examines how *Democratic Vistas*—an essay that linked "the transmission, reception, and circulation of 'culture' to the nation's social evolution"—"laid the groundwork for that concept's adoption by future sociologists, anthropologists, and activists at the turn of the twentieth century"; reveals that *Democratic Vistas* belongs to "a continuous critical tradition," that of "the sociology of culture" that "combined hermeneutics and aesthetics to 'historicize' and examine national literatures"; analyzes changes Whitman made to the final "Orbic Literature" section of the essay, including the addition of a reference to a speech by Ainsworth Rand Spofford, the Librarian of Congress during Reconstruction, who shaped the field of library science, and whose ideas about reading influenced Whitman's own notions of "'gymnastic' reading"; compares Spofford's career and ideas to Whitman's and shows how for both men "literature encased the intellectual spirit of the past as deposits of its cultural evolution."]

Robertson, Michael. "Disciples." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 361-373. [Looks at the "significant number of readers" in the nineteenth century who saw Whitman "as much prophet as poet" and who believed "his work constituted a new bible"; examines "Whitman's nineteenth-century disciples"—including William O'Connor, John Burroughs, Richard Maurice Bucke, William Michael Rossetti, Anne Gilchrist, Oscar Wilde, John Addington Symonds, Edward Carpenter, J. W. Wallace, and Horace Traubel—and explains how "each of them constructed a unique 'Walt Whitman' in accord with his or her particular spiritual, affectional, and political needs."]

Rubinstein, Rachel. "Native American and Immigrant Cultures." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 306-315. [Examines how "foregrounding the entanglement of immigrant and Native America in both the larger culture and in Whitman's poetics . . . reframes the context for understanding Whitman's simultaneous and often paradoxical embrace of diversity and nationalism, Native erasures and appropriations," and argues that, "given the strains inherent in Whitman's identification of immigrants and Indians with territorial expansion, it is not surprising that his catalogs, implicating Indians, slaves, immigrants, and workers of all kinds in his vision of an amalgamated America, have been celebrated as foundational for modern multiculturalism by some, and critiqued as "consonant with American imperialism" by others."]

Satelmajer, Ingrid I. "Periodical Poetry." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 68-77. [Offers an overview of the "more than 150 poems in periodicals" that Whitman published "throughout the span of his adult life," from his "unremarkable" and "derivative" early poetry through his antislavery poetry in the early 1850s through his poems in the Bohemian *Saturday Press*; tracks his later periodical poetry publication in magazines that were part of the "Republican publishing network."]

Schober, Regina. "Transcendentalism." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 189-197. [Explores the "points of contact between transcendentalist thought and Whitman's poetry, especially as manifest in their notion of interconnectedness" and shows "how Whitman, in his own idiosyncratic

style, transformed transcendentalist philosophy" through his emphasis on the body and his preference for the city and "the masses" over nature and solitude.]

Skaggs, Carmen Trammell. "Opera." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 108-116. [Argues that "any thorough assessment of [Whitman's] work must take seriously his recollection about opera's influence on his composition during the decade preceding the publication of the first edition" of *Leaves of Grass*, and goes on to track Whitman's experience attending operas, his writing about opera, and the ways he "returns to the metaphor of singing to describe not only the voices of America that speak to him . . . but also the poems that have yet to be created"; suggests that "Whitman's real innovation in the context of opera was a democratic one, consisting of his ability to relocate and to transpose staged art and its voices . . . in nature, speaking the language of the common man" and "bringing the players and sounds of opera beyond the performance hall."]

Skal, David J. *Something in the Blood: The Untold Story of Bram Stoker, the Man Who Wrote Dracula*. New York: Liveright, 2016. [Chapter 3, "Songs of Calamus, Songs of Sappho" (85-140), traces how Stoker had one of "his life-changing epiphanies" at first encountering Whitman's work in William Michael Rossetti's 1868 *Selected Poems of Walt Whitman*, and how "his Whitman epiphany coincided with the height of his athletic obsession with his own body and the bodies of other competitive young men"; transcribes and analyzes Stoker's February 18, 1872, letter to Whitman, written when Stoker was in his mid-20s but not sent until four years later, in which he poured out his confused sexual feelings to the poet: "The letter remains the most personal and passionate document Stoker ever wrote" and "raises as many questions as it seems to answer." Chapter 5, "Londoners" (191-238), contains descriptions of Stoker's two meetings with Whitman, in Philadelphia and Camden, in the 1880s.]

Stacy, Jason. "Journalism." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 88-97. [Traces Whitman's career in journalism, from his becoming a "printer's devil" as a boy through his work as a printer-journalist in the 1830s and on through various journalistic series he wrote in the 1840s and his editing work during that decade on papers like the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, then his work on newspapers in the 1850s while he was writing and publishing the

first three editions of *Leaves of Grass*, as "journalism increasingly became a grind" for him.]

Swist, Wally. "Walt Whitman on Donald Trump." *Eureka Street* [Australia] 28 no. 17 (September 2018), eurekastreet.com.au. [Poem, beginning "Oh, you snake oil selling *provocateur*, / you faux gilded imposter / selling authoritarianism for American / democracy, may you choke / on your own phlegm-filled speeches. . . ."]

Tudor, Philippa. "Holst, Vaughan Williams and Walt Whitman." *Musical Times* [London] 159 (Winter 2018), 3-26. [Uses "recently rediscovered settings" of Whitman's work composed by Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst to examine "their choices of Whitman's texts, and the inter-relationship between Holst and Vaughan Williams in their development and performance"; offers a comparative chronological list of the two poets' numerous Whitman compositions, from 1899 to 1936, and traces how "the Walt Whitman settings by both Vaughan Williams and Holst demonstrate the development of their respective musical styles, and their combined attempts to break new musical ground as pioneering composers," as well as how "the subject matter of Whitman's poetry assisted their exploration of fresh ideas about death and war, whilst Holst's use of free verse provided a natural bridge to his exploration of innovative time signatures."]

Tuggle, Lindsay. "Science and Medicine." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 347-358. [Argues that, "in tandem with his belief in the cellular unification of body and soul, Whitman saw science and poetry as symbiotically connected"; goes on to trace how, "throughout his career . . . Whitman sought to unify scientific detachment and poetic empathy," especially during the Civil War, when Whitman absorbed the "widespread cultural obsession" with "specimen collection" and created his own unique written collections of "specimen cases," adapting the diagnostic use of specimens in medicine to his own "reverential" use; recounts Whitman's experience with wounded bodies in the Civil War hospitals against the backdrop of the medical use of the "abundant specimens" the war afforded, and shows how his war experiences led him to abandon his faith in "fertile decay" in favor of appropriating "embalming technology to achieve what was formerly nature's sacred work: the 'last chemistry' that banishes decomposition"; concludes by looking at Whitman's own death and at Whitman's decision "to allow his own cadaver to be dissected," choosing "to 'bequeath' his corpse not to

the grass he loved, but to science."]

Vander Zee, Anton. "Inventing Late Whitman." *ESQ* (2017), 641-680. [Points out how Whitman in his old age was venerated by his disciples, even as they neglected his old-age work; offers an evocative reading of Whitman's 1887 poem "Twilight," and raises the issue of why the late poems have never been read on their own terms; traces the effects of William Douglas O'Connor's "The Good Gray Poet" on the shaping of "the poet's late authorial personae" and on the framing of "his life and work strategically as a response to both the Civil War and to the persistent charges of *Leaves*' obscenity," turning the "yawper of yore" into "a Homeric, white-bearded, sterling-haired, purified, and sacrificial saint: Whitman in age, at once iconic and benign"; tracks how John Burroughs and Richard Maurice Bucke joined in endorsing this transformation; examines in depth how "the critic Edward Dowden played a crucial and almost entirely ignored role in constructing Whitman's late authorship"; looks at Whitman's own comments on his late work, and concludes by tracking recent scholarship that has begun, finally, to read Whitman's late work effectively.]

Walter, William T. "Long Island." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 3-14. [Offers an overview of Whitman's ancestors on Long Island and of Whitman's relationship to the island, from his birth in West Hills through his final visit in 1881.]

Whitman, Walt. *Benliğimin Şarkısı* [*Song of Myself*]. Translated by Aytek Sever. Turkey: İşaret Ateşi, isaretatesi.com, 2018. [First Turkish translation of the complete "Song of Myself," in the 1881 version.]

Whitman, Walt. *Çimen Yaprakları: Seçme Şiirler* [*Leaves of Grass: Selected Poems*]. Translated by Aytek Sever. Turkey: İşaret Ateşi, isaretatesi.com, 2018. [Translation into Turkish, by Aytek Sever, of selected poems from the "deathbed edition" of *Leaves of Grass,* with an introduction by the translator (12-19; in Turkish) and a Turkish translation of Whitman's 1855 preface to *Leaves* (21-54).]

Wilson, Ivy G. "Slavery and Abolition." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 297-305. [Offers "a critique of Whitman's poems about slavery and abolitionism," arguing that these works "reveal as much about his politics as they do the reading practices invited by his poetics"; examines particu-

larly the issues of slavery and abolition in the "Talbot Wilson" notebook, "A Boston Ballad," "Song of Myself," and "I Sing the Body Electric."]

Yothers, Brian. "Nineteenth-Century Religion." In Joanna Levin and Edward Whitley, eds., *Walt Whitman in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 259-268. [Examines ways that "Whitman tapped into an increasing religious cosmopolitanism in the nineteenth-century United States," creating a "religiously complex poetic persona that . . . would not be possible were it not formed by a religious context in which American Protestant religious diversity, immigrant faiths, and world religions were in contact and dialogue."]

The University of Iowa ED FOLSOM

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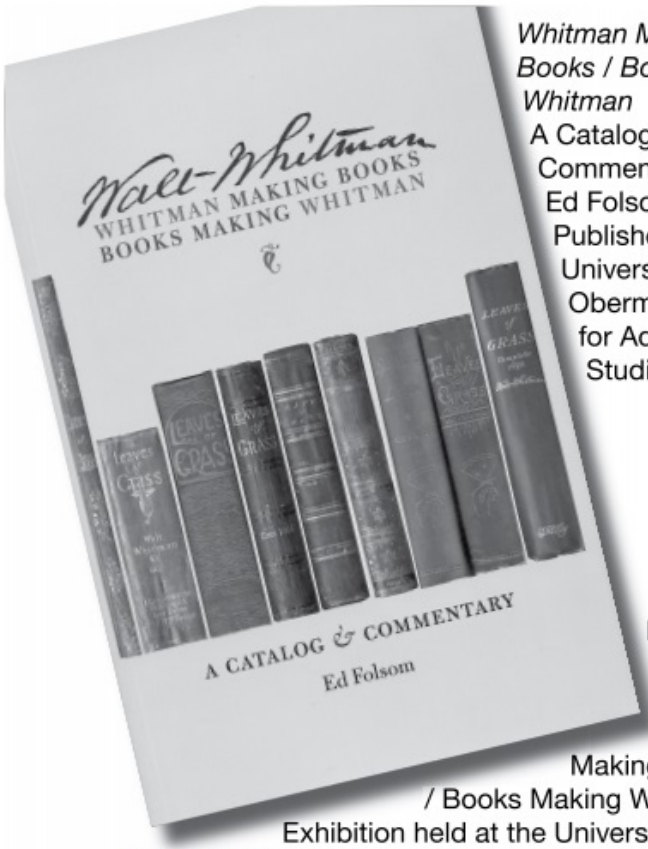

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QUOTING AND CITING WALT WHITMAN'S WORK

When quoting from individual editions of *Leaves of Grass* (the 1855, 1856, 1860, 1867, 1870-1871, 1881, 1891), please use the facsimiles available online on the *Walt Whitman Archive,* and cite the edition, date, and page numbers, followed by "Available on the *Walt Whitman Archive* (www.whitmanarchive.org)." Do not list the URL of individual page images or the date accessed. After the initial citation, contributors should abbreviate as "*LG*" followed by the year of the edition and the page number (e.g., *LG*1855 15).

The standard edition of Whitman's work is the *Walt Whitman Archive* (www.whitmanarchive.org) in addition to *The Collected Writings of Walt Whitman*, twenty-two volumes published by the New York University Press under the general editorship of Gay Wilson Allen and Sculley Bradley, and supplemented with volumes published by the University of Iowa Press and Peter Lang. Citations and quotations from Whitman's writings not yet available on the *Walt Whitman Archive* should be keyed to the specific volumes in this edition.

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EPF	*The Early Poems and Fiction*, edited by Thomas L. Brasher (1963)
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DBN	*Daybooks and Notebooks*, edited by William White. 3 vols. (1978).

NUPM — *Notebooks and Unpublished Prose Manuscripts*, edited by Edward F. Grier. 6 vols. (1984).

Journ — *The Journalism*, edited by Herbert Bergmann, Douglas A. Noverr, and Edward J. Recchia. Vol. 1: 1834-1846 (1998); Vol. 2: 1846-1848 (2003).

Corr — *The Correspondence*, edited by Edwin Haviland Miller. Vol. 1: 1842-1867 (1961); Vol. 2: 1868-1875 (1961); Vol. 3: 1876-1885 (1964); Vol. 4: 1886-1889 (1969); Vol. 5: 1890-1892 (1969); Vol. 6: A Supplement; Vol. 7: edited by Ted Genoways (2004).

For Whitman's correspondence, letters available on the *Walt Whitman Archive* take precedence over the *The Correspondence* edited by Edwin Haviland Miller. These should be cited in this format: Sender to recipient, month, day, year, followed by "Available on the *Walt Whitman Archive* (www.whitmanarchive.org, ID: xxx.00000)"—e.g., Herbert Gilchrist to Walt Whitman, August 20, 1882. Available on the *Walt Whitman Archive* (www.whitmanarchive.org, ID: loc.02192).

Horace Traubel's *With Walt Whitman in Camden* (9 Vols) is available on the *Walt Whitman Archive*. After an intial citation followed by "Available on the *Walt Whitman Archive* (www.whitmanarchive.org)," it should be abbreviated *WWWC*, followed by its volume and page number (e.g. *WWWC* 3:45).

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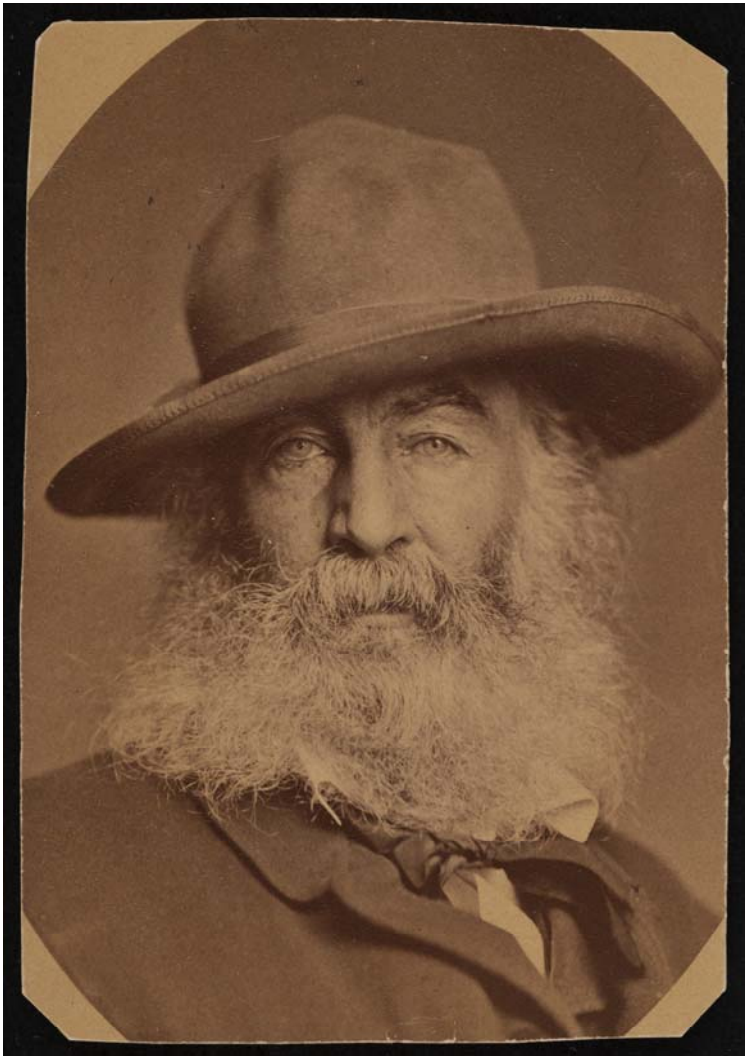

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