WALT WHITMAN
QUARTERLY REVIEW

VOLUME THIRTY-SIX NUMBER ONE SUMMER 2018

A SCHOLARLY OPEN ACCESS JOURNAL

// WALT WHITMAN QUARTERLY REVIEW

VOLUME THIRTY-SIX NUMBER ONE SUMMER 2018

Walt Whitman Quarterly Review is an open access literary quarterly sponsored by the Graduate College and the Department of English and published by The University of Iowa.

EDITOR
Ed Folsom, The University of Iowa

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Stephanie M. Blalock, The University of Iowa

EDITORIAL BOARD
Betsy Erkkila, Northwestern University
Walter Grünzweig, Universität Dortmund
M. Jimmie Killingsworth, Texas A&M University
Jerome Loving, Texas A&M University
Kenneth M. Price, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Michael Robertson, The College of New Jersey
M. Wynn Thomas, Swansea University

MANAGING EDITORS
Brandon James O'Neil, The University of Iowa
Stefan Schöberlein, Marshall University

Address all correspondence to: *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*, The University of Iowa, 308 English Philosophy Bldg., Iowa City, IA 52242-1492

wwqr@uiowa.edu http://ir.uiowa.edu/wwqr

CONTENTS

ESSAYS

1 Untuning Walt Whitman's Prophetic Voice / Yosefa Raz

27 A "Reconstructed Sociology": *Democratic Vistas* and the American Social Science Movement / Timothy D. Robbins

REVIEWS

72 Matt Cohen, *Whitman's Drift: Imagining Literary Distribution* / Meredith McGill

77 Lindsay Tuggle, *The Afterlives of Specimens: Science, Mourning, and Whitman's Civil War* / Adam Bradford

BIBLIOGRAPHY

85 Walt Whitman: A Current Bibliography / Ed Folsom

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.

UNTUNING WALT WHITMAN'S PROPHETIC VOICE

YOSEFA RAZ

In "Loving Walt Whitman and the Problem of America," Alicia Ostriker writes as both a poet and scholar on Whitman's lasting influence, describing her excited discovery of "Song of Myself" as a teenager before moving more broadly to consider Whitman's formative influence on the long American poem. Finally, Ostriker illuminates Whitman's contribution to—and possible invention of—a public, political poetry, the "common language" of Adrienne Rich. "When we turn, as poets, to the state of the nation and of our common life" says Ostriker, "the ghost of Whitman turns with us."[1] Yet in the last few pages of the essay, Ostriker interrupts her tribute, compelled by the urgency of the specific historical moment in which she writes—the first weeks of the Gulf War in 1991. Her tone shifts to a fierce condemnation of Whitman's support of war in "Drum-Taps," his poem-cycle written in response to the events of the Civil War.[2] "When I read 'Drum-Taps' today I cannot forgive Whitman's representation of the Civil War as spectacle, as pageantry, as tragic necessity" (35). In the penultimate paragraph of the essay, Ostriker declares, "I wish, cruelly, that the men dying in Whitman's arms could have driven him mad" (36).

What is it that allows Whitman to hold the dying in his arms and not go mad? An important aspect of Whitman's spectacle of war—the one that Ostriker so vehemently resists—is his activation of a grand prophetic voice. In his 1865 *Drum-Taps*, the poet attends to the wounds and injuries of the soldiers, but he also sees them as part of a kind of pageant of past and future wars. For example, "The Centenarian's Story" ties the grand war of the past, the American Revolution, with the present war: "the two, the past and present, have interchanged" (*DT* 23). The ability to read the present through the past and connect it to the future is formulated as an optimistic

visionary enterprise; even amid the agonies of war, the speaker of the poem-cycle imagines himself "as connecter, as chansonnier of a great future." Whitman's chansonnier sings to the beat of the war drums, underlaid with the elegiac pathos of "taps," what T.W. Higginson calls a "mystic curfew."[3] Later in the cycle, Whitman summons a "prophetic" voice rising from the field of "carnage" (*DT* 49), seeming to mobilize an authority and strength in service of the war, panning out from the terrible details of battles to a great panorama of destruction and redemption.

In this essay, I explore the power and authority Whitman generates through the prophetic voice, especially in relation to war, but also to consider the fissures and weakness that underlie this use of prophecy. Through attending to the underlying anxieties of prophecy, this essay will emphasize prophecy as a destabilizing and unsettling figure, rather than focusing exclusively on prophecy as an authoritative force imposing apocalyptic symmetry on psychological and historical processes. In the second part of this essay, I wish to demonstrate these dialectics of prophetic power through reading an example of Whitman's afterlife in contemporary American poetry. Like Ostriker, Rob Halpern condemns Whitman for his embrace of the pathos of war, and he echoes and critiques Whitman's *Drum-Taps* in his 2012 *Music for Porn*. In a sense, it can be read as an extended meditation on Ostriker's retroactive curse; the American soldiers who metaphorically die in Halpern's arms are allowed to disfigure the poetic text, driving it into the kind of obsessive madness Whitman denied himself. Halpern's poetry functions as an intervention in Whitman's rhetoric, an "untuning" of Whitman's prophetic voice, especially its role in reframing the Civil War after reconciliation, uncovering the anxiety latent in Whitman's prophetic voice. At the same time, Halpern's poetry opens up new possibilities for Whitman's afterlife in American poetry based on the prophetic body, rather than the prophetic voice.

The Problem with Prophecy

It is a commonplace to consider Walt Whitman's poetry "prophetic"

and to read Whitman himself as an American prophet, or perhaps, *the* prophet of America. In making this identification, readers and critics undoubtedly point to an important element in his poetics: Whitman consciously ties his poetry directly back to the Bible itself through the notion that he is constructing a "New Bible," [4] as well as situating himself in a more recent tradition of English Romantics. Yet a reference to prophecy can become abstract, hyperbolic, and all-encompassing, both in the speech of poets and in the speech of critics. As Shira Wolosky puts it, Whitman "persistently deploys religious terms for his poetic venture, with the further realization of American promise as including a religious dimension, alternately called moral, spiritual, prophetic, soul."[5] At its worst, prophecy is taken by critics as a vague signifier for historical resonance, authority, and spirituality; it is abstracted into a kind of speech act, rather than read as part of a complex and multivalent biblical tradition, with its own particular use of metaphorical figures, including the reoccurring figure of an allegorical marriage as well the contrast of the prophetic body with empire. At the same time, critics sometimes isolate a single element of prophecy, an uncomplicated singular tone or message of the Hebrew prophets, or a "prophetic ethics," and apply it to Whitman's poetics. In Herbert J. Levine's "'Song of Myself' as Whitman's American Bible," for example, Whitman's prophetic mode is read exclusively in a tradition of prophetic rebuke, leaving no room for other functions, such as reconciliation. In "I Sing the Body Electric," says Levine, "Whitman's aim . . . is essentially that of the biblical prophets: to make a whole people confront its moral failings."[6] In fact, Whitman himself writes, "We need somebody or something . . . like an old Hebrew prophet's [sic] . . . crying aloud: Hear, O people! . . . Ye are in the midst of idols of clay, silver, and brass. I come to call you to the knowledge of the Living God, in writings."[7]

However, as Ian Balfour remarks about English and German Romanticism, though it is equally true of Whitman, "prophecy is not a single thing, and one has to attend to the differences that are sometimes tenuously grouped together under a single word."[8] Prophecy does not include only one theme or affect, nor does it exclusively refer to prediction or rebuke; it is also a way to invoke despair, reconciliation,

and restoration, and to reflect on questions of inspiration, nation-building, catastrophe, and empire. In many ways, biblical prophetic resonances do add a timbre of depth and wisdom to Whitman's assertions; like the Hebrew prophets, his claim to prophecy relies on an extraordinary sense of calling, stemming from an experience of mystical communion. This prophetic calling allows Whitman to speak for the soul of the crowd, the soul of the nation, the past and future of America. At the same time, though, the prophetic figure also has the potential to be a destabilizing force; the prophet exposes but also experiences—in his own self and body—social and affective ruptures, undoing what seems to be holding together the community and the nation, ventriloquizing and acting out the catastrophe of history. Thus, while an appeal to prophecy often seems to summon authority and power, in Whitman's work, as in the works of other great poet-prophets, the marshalling of prophetic strength, or the creation of a towering prophetic voice, is often a reaction to social and psychological anxieties, covering over instabilities, insecurities, stutters, and fissures – what we could call prophetic weakness.

Recent shifts in understanding English Romanticism may guide us through reading Whitman's various iterations of prophecy, which continue Emerson's American reformulations of English Romanticism. As M.H. Abrams puts it in *Natural Supernaturalism*—himself adopting a grand, if not prophetic tone — it was in the wake of the promise and failure of the French Revolution that a group of poets and philosophers "conceived themselves as elected spokesmen for the Western tradition at a time of profound cultural crisis. They represented themselves in the traditional persona of the philosopher-seer or the poet-prophet . . . and they set out, in various yet recognizably parallel ways, to reconstitute the grounds of hope and to announce with certainty, at least the possibility, of a rebirth in which a renewed mankind will inhabit a renovated earth where he will find himself thoroughly at home."[9] According to Abrams, the English Romantic poets drew upon the authority of the biblical texts to establish moral certitude and a self-confidant, heightened tone. The biblical prophets' appeal to divine authority was assimilated and reinterpreted as the authority of the autonomous and individual self.

Thus, in envisioning the future, Romantic poet-prophets were to imagine and call into action great symmetries and patterns of history: destruction and redemption, death and rebirth.[10] Yet, as Christopher Bundock points out, reading prophecy exclusively as the voice of authority limits its possibilities: for M.H. Abrams, Harold Bloom, and others, "under the Romantic drive for millennial restoration, prophecy seem[ed] to designate only a historical will to harmony, to stage a secular theodicy that promises a future."[11]

The poet-prophet who emerges in some Romantic poetry is decidedly less grand and successful than the ideal articulated by mid-twentieth-century critics. In contrast to Abrams, Bundock reads figures like Wordsworth and Kant as "Romantic prophets longing for a predictive, totalizing concept of prophecy—something that would control the spectre of contingency—in the era of its impossibility."[12] Using prophecy to shore up this defensive position involves an unacknowledged and willful blindness to the disappointments in "prophecy's healing and unifying promise" (12). Bundock argues that literary criticism has undergone a profound shift in the way that it understands Romantic poetry, specifically poetry written in the prophetic tradition. For a new generation of scholars influenced by deconstruction and New Historicism, the prophetic mode does not create authority, but rather poses a set of problems and questions. Maurice Blanchot exemplifies this critical shift, which has been taken up in more detail by scholars like Bundock, Jon Mee, Ian Balfour, and Steven Goldsmith.[13] Blanchot speaks to the way that prophecy marks a loss of assurance and stability, rather than creating authoritative strength: "when speech becomes prophetic, it is not the future that is given, it is the present that is taken away, and with it any possibility of a firm, stable, lasting presence."[14] Along the same lines, Bundock reads the prophecy of English Romanticism as ultimately destabilizing rather than authoritative: "prophecy works less to rebuild an edifice of legitimacy than to splay out history's fragmentation" (21). In this essay, I wish to continue to critique the notion of the poet-prophet as towering genius of majestic authority by examining the prophetic voice in American poetry. I argue that the construction of a voice of authoritative prophecy, with foreknowledge of history's

grand symmetries, often marks an anxious covering over of fragments and ambiguities, of the incoherencies and failures of the prophetic task and text.

The Power of Prophetic Joining

What voice called to Whitman from a burning bush, and who placed a burning coal on his lips, transforming him forever? For Whitman, the call to prophecy may have first come, prosaically, at a lecture given by Ralph Waldo Emerson in 1842.[15] In a review for the New York *Aurora,* Whitman pokes fun at the literary types in attendance: ugly women, men in dandified Byron collars, abolitionists, and followers of the diets and lifestyle prescribed by Reverend Sylvester Graham, today of Graham cracker fame. Yet Whitman was also profoundly moved: "the lecture was one of the richest and most beautiful compositions, both for its matter and style, we have heard anywhere, at any time."[16]

Emerson begins his essay by associating poetry with foreknowledge: "The sign and credentials of the poet are, that he announces that which no man foretold" (9). However, for Emerson, as for the English Romantics before him, prophecy is not simply oracular, a matter of future prediction: "Beside [the poet's] privacy of power as an individual man, there is a great public power, on which he can draw, by unlocking, at all risks, his human doors, and suffering the ethereal tides to roll and circulate through him: then he is caught up into the life of the Universe, his speech is thunder, his thought is law, and his words are universally intelligible as the plants and animals" (29). While for Emerson, the "great public power" available to the poet-prophet involves a paradoxical loss of control, a potential loss of subjectivity, Whitman's 1855 preface to *Leaves of Grass* emphasizes, in contrast, the poet-prophet's strength and agency. For the poet, "Past and present and future are not disjoined but joined. The greatest poet forms the consistence of what is to be from what has been and is. He drags the dead out of their coffins and stands them again on their feet . . . . he says to the past, Rise and walk before me that I may realize you. He learns the lesson . . . . he places himself where the future becomes present."[17]

In this formulation, Whitman includes himself in the Romantic and biblical tradition that imagines the poet as a prophet, since his poet places himself "where the future becomes present" (*LG*1855 vi). The poet-prophet forcefully and even brutally resurrects the dead, standing them on their feet like Ezekiel, who prophesizes over the dry bones of the dead until they grow flesh and sinew and are miraculously revived into a great army (Ezek. 37:10). More broadly, though, the poet-prophet functions as a master craftsman, forming the future from the material of the past, joining together temporalities (or dry bones) like fine pieces of wood. Yet in celebrating the poet-prophet's power to join, Whitman's prose preface also rhetorically acknowledges the possibility of "disjoining," the problem of a fragmented reality, with the frequent ellipses in the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* reflecting this tension between joining and disjoining. The ellipses bind together Whitman's lists and associations, while also marking a kind of gap, an open space between phrases that is unbounded by the strictures of more conventional punctuation, the site of disjoining.

Whitman's prophetic power to join together what appears disjoined, or disjointed reverberates throughout his early poetry, starting with the first version of "Song of Myself." The poem is full of images of joining and joints: the sun joins other suns; a "jointer" appears among a list of tools; there are "shipjoiner[s]," "disjointed friendship[s]," and many mentions of the "joints" of a human body (*LG*1855 61, 79, 31, 76).

> He resolves all tongues into his own, and bestows it upon men . . and any man translates . . and any man translates himself also:
> One part does not counteract another part . . . . He is the joiner . . he sees how they join. (*LG*1855 86)

In this beautiful image, the poet joins together languages like a shipwright, a carpenter, a mason. But he is not only a craftsman, but a witness: "he sees how they join." On a formal level, Whitman's poetry joins together (and witnesses the joining of) diverse images, contrary forces, high and low registers, the scriptural and the vernacular. Emerson comes to describe Whitman's work as a "remarkable

mixture of the Bhagavat Gita and the NY Herald."[18] Thematically, Whitman's poetry joins together the body and soul, individuals into a great nation, the states and the union, the mystical and the political.

While the joining together of the self—the mystical union of body and soul—seems at times pleasurable and effortless, "joining" is also experienced as a more fraught experience. A short passage toward the end of "Song of Myself" begins with ecstatic praise of the endless capacities of language and speech: "With the twirl of my tongue I encompass worlds and volumes of worlds" (*LG* 1855 31). However, this exuberant celebration of the power of language is challenged by a more embodied, oblique experience, what Stephen John Mack calls a "romantic conception of subsensory intuitive knowledge."[19]

Do you not know how the buds beneath are folded?
Waiting in gloom protected by frost,
The dirt receding before my prophetical screams,
I underlying causes to balance them at last,
My knowledge my live parts . . . . it keeping tally with the meaning of things,
Happiness . . . . which whoever hears me let him or her set out in search of this day. (*LG*1855 31)

The poet-prophet's task here is articulated as an imperative to balance "underlying causes," to harmonize and join together various narratives, perhaps of the self, or of the nation. This balancing action, though, is postponed to an undefined future. In the present, the stylized "twirls of the tongue" yield to the harsher "prophetical screams." While the screams may ultimately fulfill a more important role than pretty turns of phrases, aligning the poet with the forces of growth in the natural world, these disrupting screams also connote fear and pain, or perhaps an animal-like shriek.

How do the prophetical screams of the poet-self join the harmonious whole? If we were to read Whitman's prophetic task primarily as rebuke, the screams could be meant to disrupt and unravel a sense of false harmony. However, these prophetical screams are only a part of the chorus of voices, catalogued in the lines to follow, from children's babble, to fishmongers' cries, to the convulsions of the soprano at the opera. The poet's job is to join and tune together

moments of fear and desperation, and other negative affects—"the angry base of disjointed friendship . . . . the faint tones of the sick" (31)—with more positive affects and to achieve a symphonic whole. However if the poet-as-joiner must integrate the prophetical screams with a great variety of human and natural sounds, what might be the price of this joining? What happens to the prophetic screams when they are tuned together into a great symphonic, operatic sound? Are these sounds—of suffering, fear, judgement—incorporated into the choir, or written over, repressed? For Emerson, "The painter, the sculptor, the composer, the epic rhapsodist, the orator, all partake one desire, namely, to express themselves symmetrically and abundantly, not dwarfishly and fragmentarily."[20] Are prophetical screams dwarfish and fragmentary, or are they symmetrical and abundant? These screams get covered over in Whitman's postwar prophecies, replaced by more grand and operatic tones, but we might still listen for their hidden echoes.

Over the Carnage

Nearly a decade after this first formulation of poetry as prophecy, Whitman's wartime poetry collection, *Drum-Taps,* revisits the notion of the poet-prophet as a craftsman-joiner, or as a tuner of many voices into a great symphonic whole. The overarching and organizing figure of *Drum-Taps* is also musical, though "soft opera-music changed, and the drum and fife were heard in their stead" (*DT* 5). The collection is organized around the stirring sound of drums summoning to war the Northern soldiers, specifically the boys and men of Manhattan and Brooklyn. The poems that follow form a complex and multifaceted song of war, from an enthusiastic embrace of Northern patriotism and the Union flag, to scenes of wartime loss, and a witnessing, through the persona of the "wound-dresser," of the pathetic injuries and deaths of the soldiers.

One of the most explicitly prophetic poems that Whitman composed in his career appears in *Drum-Taps* as "Over the Carnage Rose Prophetic a Voice." Unlike more direct descriptions of the battlefield and of the loss associated with the war, this short poem does

not linger on the details of the wounded and dead, but stirringly rises above them in a prophetic vision of reconciliation, a healing of the maimed union, a kind of blossoming of a "carnage rose," as Ed Folsom has pointed out.[21] Though the first line is written in response to the war, many of the lines of the poem previously appeared in the Calamus poem sequence, included in the 1860 edition *Leaves of Grass*. While the prewar lines spoke exuberantly in the first person, in this reworked version, the prophetic voice, which echoes Whitman's earlier declarations, has formally separated from the persona of Whitman's "I". The disembodied voice emerging from the battlefield declares an end to war. The fraternal violence of war, it announces, will be replaced by love and affection, as the "most dauntless and rude shall touch face to face lightly."[22] In other words, it paints an allegorical vision of national reconciliation, based on the triumph of affection and love between men from the North and from the South, all depicted as the sons of Mother Columbia:

One from Massachusetts shall be a Missourian's comrade,
From Maine and from hot Carolina, and another an Oregonese,
shall be friends triune,
More precious to each other than all the riches of the earth. (*DT* 49)

While the sense of "affection" or "manly affection" between the men of different states was already present in the 1860 "Calamus" poem, the 1865 version beautifully echoes the final words of Abraham Lincoln's first inaugural address in 1861, where he cautions Americans: "though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection."[23] If the war had tragically broken these bonds, against Lincoln's (and Whitman's) warning, Whitman's poem now calls for their repair. These bonds of affection, posited as an alternative to male aggressiveness and competitiveness, echo the language of "adhesiveness" that Whitman adopted from the science of phrenology; as Folsom and Kenneth Price show, this language "provided Whitman with an early word for male-male affection at a time when such terms were not easy to find."[24] In the Calamus sequence this is made more explicit: "There shall from me be a new friendship—it shall be called after my name" (*LG*1860 349). Through multiple layers of figuration,

the poem creates an erotic allegory for the nation, which at the same time alludes to the real friendships Whitman observed and developed with men of different states during the course of the war. The bands of love and affection that are to tie together the men of the republic, "stronger than hoops of iron," are reminiscent of the prophetic joining we saw in the 1855 preface. Now, the careful craft of the poet-prophet in "Song of Myself" is transformed into a jubilant task: "I, ecstatic, O partners! O lands! with the love of lovers tie you" (line 19).

In what sense is this voice "prophetic"? Its power derives, in part, from the way it alludes to some specific biblical prophecies. First, the miraculous message of hope in the face of desolation and ruin suggests Ezekiel's vision of the Valley of Bones, which, as we saw, also functioned as an intertext to the 1855 preface. When Ezekiel prophesizes over the dry bones, they acquire skin, flesh, sinews, and breath, forming a great army. In Whitman's poem, the valley described in the Book of Ezekiel, filled with dry bones –the remnants of a terrible battle or massacre – is figured as an unspecified battlefield of "carnage." The somewhat abstract image of carnage may be based on a more specific image, recorded by Whitman in an 1862 journal entry. Outside a mansion converted into a field hospital, Whitman encountered a "heap of amputated feet, legs, arms, &c., a full load for a one-horse cart."[25] In another journal, he describes "human fragments, cut, bloody, black and blue, swelled and sickening."[26] As Folsom and Price argue, the heap of body parts were to haunt Whitman as an image for the fragmented union, for the terrible "disjoining" that war inflicted. Read together with Ezekiel, these human fragments seem to cohere together in Whitman's poem, resurrecting the men from different states that populate the prophetic vision, forming them into a great "invincible" army of comrades.

In envisioning the end of war, Whitman employs a rhetoric of dramatic, if not miraculous, reversals. Enemies are now loving friends. Dangers to the reconstituted republic will inspire laughter rather than fear. Whitman's exultant vision of houses and streets teeming with love and affection may also echo a set of oracles from Jeremiah that employ images of miraculous reversals to dramatize prophetic hope: lament and sorrow will be transformed into songs of joy, chil-

dren and flocks will multiply in places of desolation (Jer. 33:1-19). In Jeremiah, the image of a wedding is used as a dramatic contrast to the devastation of war: "Again shall be heard in this place . . . even in the cities of Judah, and the streets of Jerusalem . . . the voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride" (Jer. 33:11).[27] Whitman's poem also envisions the new, hopeful, reality as a kind of marriage, enacting a ritual in which the men of the different states are tied together, with the speaker's exclamation, "I tie you" , recalling a wedding ceremony.

Specifically, the reconciliation between Northerners and Southerners in "Over the Carnage" evokes the marital re-union described in the last chapters of the book of Isaiah, echoing a particular wedding that the Hebrew prophets imagine again and again: the wedding of God to his bride Zion, in what Abrams describes as "the apocalyptic marriage." The metaphor of the land or the nation as a woman is central to the prophetic corpus, and in many prophetic texts, Zion is figured not only as God's young and lovely bride, but also as his betraying adulterous spouse, his barren wife, and even his widow. In the second part of the Book of Isaiah, the prophet imagines a *remarriage* between God and Zion. Zion, who has been abandoned by God and left without her children as a punishment for her sins, is re-espoused, and her children are returned to her. In Isaiah 40:2, the prophetic voice comforts Zion, because "her warfare is accomplished . . . her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." In passages like these, the figure of a remarriage functions as a theodicy that justifies the suffering of the nation in exile: the children who went missing will now be returned, the land will return to be cultivated, and God will once more love his nation-wife.

As Folsom points out, in the years after the war many novels and stories portrayed the marriage of a male Northerner to a female Southerner: "By figuring a marriage between two people from opposite sides of the Civil War, these writers created an imaginary space that helped readers think their way toward the possibilities of a Re-United States."[28] However, in "Over the Carnage," the marriage between God and Zion is recast as male friendship between equals, a

democratic and erotic vision. For Betsy Erkkila, the poem expresses "the centrality of the Civil War in testing and affirming not only the American union but a range of physical and emotional bonds of affection and intimacy among men as the foundation of the future American republic."[29] The figure of remarriage in the background of the poem adds a great deal of pathos to Whitman's vision of reconciliation, an added power to his prophetic-poetic "joining." Furthermore, in introducing the image of a betrothal/marriage ceremony, Whitman may be creating a nineteenth-century theodicy, suggesting that the union is now stronger for having suffered.

However, as Whitman adopts prophetic rhetoric, he also adopts some of its structural flaws or instabilities. In fact, the erasure of cultural memory is built into the very structure of prophetic consolation. Consider for example, Isaiah 54:4, in which Zion, here figured as a "barren woman" or "widow," is told that she will not fear or be ashamed, because she will forget her youthful indiscretion and the "reproach of [her] widowhood." In other words, for the remarriage to take place and affection to miraculously take the place of violence and aggression, it seems that Zion must forget her sin of faithless betrayal as well as her terrible punishment. More broadly, the passage from Isaiah dramatizes the complexity of forgetting if you have to remember what you've forgotten, or perhaps, as Ron Hendel puts it, the way "national, ethnic, and religious identities are founded on this dialectic of remembering and forgetting."[30] In the case of Whitman, in order to mourn the equally divine dead and to announce the dawn of a new era, the ideological differences that tore North and South apart, as well as the institution of slavery itself and the dangerous lives of the freed slaves, must be actively forgotten, or at least allowed to gently recede into the past.

Prophecy as Repression

On a first encounter, "Over the Carnage Rose Prophetic a Voice" seems to announce a new reality, and its ability to summon an optimistic vision of the future despite present circumstances seems to demonstrate the imaginative prowess of the poet, if not his force-

ful will. Whitman's vision joins together former enemies as loving comrades, thereby miraculously joining and resurrecting the injured union. In considering the poem in relation to Whitman's earlier versions of prophecy, though, and against its later revisions—within a dialectic of remembering and forgetting—Whitman's prophetic task is on much less stable ground. It is strained, anxious, betraying the effort of prophetic reconciliation; as critics have pointed out, its grand tones can come off as bombastic, overly idealistic, falsely conceived, repressive of postwar realities. While acknowledging many of these critiques, I would like to argue that an anxious reading of Whitman's prophetic rhetoric can also lead to a richer, more complex reading of his prophetic position. In his wartime and postwar poetry, in trying to join together the past, present, and future, Whitman begins, perhaps inadvertently, to expose the impossibilities of joining, or the price this joining exacts.

The interplay between national remembering and forgetting can be traced though Whitman's acts of textual revision, as various lines are recast and transformed, omitted and returned, forgotten and remembered. If the notion of fraternal affection was offered in the 1860 Calamus poems as a homoerotic vision of a united society and idealistic attempt to avert bloodshed through love, the 1865 recasting of these images in "Over the Carnage Rose Prophetic a Voice" echoes this failed attempt. Read together against its earlier version, the prophetic voice, rising so powerfully over the battlefield, is also the voice of a failed utopia, covering over Whitman's inability to prevent the war. Whitman's revisions of the collection as a whole also help us identify instances of cultural forgetting. Through a close reading of the stand-alone 1865 version of *Drum-Taps* and its integration into the 1871 *Leaves of Grass*, Cristanne Miller shows how Whitman became increasingly committed to a vision of reconciliation between the North and South based on repression of difficult realities.[31] For example, he omits direct statements about the cause of the war in the 1871 version and ignores the problem of the freed slaves in the South. As opposed to the erotic and embodied speaker of the 1855 *Leaves of Grass*, the speaker of the 1871 "Drum-Taps," Miller observes, is bodiless, and "identifies primarily with the dead or with men's souls"

(185). Also, in contrast to the speaker of the 1855 "Song of Myself," the speaker of the 1871 "Drum-Taps" makes "no reference to international revolution, to a national merging or solidarity of races," and does not depict African Americans (184). In fact, neither the 1865 version nor the 1871 version of "Drum-Taps" describes the slaves or includes African-Americans among its fraternal figures. Only in the 1881 "Drum-Taps" do we get one glancing depiction of slavery itself: in "Ethiopia Saluting the Colors," the speaker turns to an old black woman, "so ancient hardly human," and imagines her witnessing the events of the war as strange and marvelous. This quasi-inhuman figure cannot participate in the vision of redemptive fraternal affection, nor in fact can any other black person. Miller's critique ultimately castigates Whitman's postwar prophecy as dangerously wishful; by 1871, his prophetic vision, as Miller puts it, had "no resonance with a realistically viewed present" (189).

Whitman's tendency to repress—or perhaps more generously, *resolve*—difficulty through prophetic rhetoric has been pointed out in relation to other texts in addition to *Drum-Taps* and subsequent reworkings of "Drum-Taps." By reading prophecy as essentially repressive and covering over anxiety, Miller joins other critics of Whitman's prophetic rhetoric, especially of the poetry and prose written after the war.. Arthur Golden discusses Whitman's use of prophetic rhetoric in two of the poet's prose essays, the unpublished "The Eighteenth Presidency!" written before the war in 1856, and "Democratic Vistas," published in 1871. Golden traces how Whitman resorts to what he calls "soothing visionary cadences" when confronted with political problems.[32] For example, faced with his disenchantment with the democratic process, Whitman imagines the appearance of a new, better race manifesting itself at an unspecified future date, "soon to confront Presidents, Congresses and parties, to look them sternly in the face, to stand no nonsense" (91). For Golden, Whitman's vision of democratic redemption of the masses "lies in a rhetorically safe shelter, the vague but comforting future" (96). For M. Wynn Thomas, Whitman exploits prophetic ambiguity to reconcile impossible political positions, specifically his idealization of white labor and his complex position on slavery.

Thomas analyzes an 1860 notebook which contains an early draft of the poem "Proto-Leaf," later to become "Starting from Paumanok." He argues that "in 'Proto-Leaf' Whitman defuses the bitter sectional conflicts of his time by imagining an indeterminate future when, by natural processes antithetical in spirit to the violent events of actual recent history, an America shall have emerged in which differences are honored but harmonized [;] . . . his poetic discourse is a medium in which the various, sometimes conflicting opinions Whitman had on the southern slavery question can be held in fluid suspension."[33] For Thomas, Whitman's idealization of workers, i.e. his dream of labor, and his postwar disappointment in America are impossible to reconcile—and his later poems are interesting "only when the full social and political pathos of their weakness is recognized" (143). As Miller, Golden, and Thomas demonstrated, readers of Whitman must also attend to the flip side of grand prophetic pronouncements, their hidden "pathos of weakness," in addition to recognizing the towering grandeur generated by the prophetic voice.

Paradoxically, though, even as Whitman's vision turns "weak," it is sustained by greater efforts, more forceful acts of joining. The "tuning together" of a plurality of voices and figures becomes more strained, more fraught with risk. Speaking of Whitman's weakness need not necessarily be a critique—it can be a recognition of the generative possibilities of weak prophecy. While Miller reads Whitman's majestic prophetic voice of reconciliation as repression, Wolosky's body of work on Whitman consistently reads his poetry as making "prophetic efforts," straining to join contraries—particularly the self and the common good—and always at the risk of failure (414). In "Over the Carnage Rose Prophetic a Voice," argues Wolosky, "Whitman calls to his readers, his country: 'affection shall solve the problems of freedom yet.' But, like America itself, Whitman neither finally accomplishes this risk-laden task, nor finally resolves the potential contradiction of a society whose commitment to individuality always carries the potential for defeat of community, even as it also forms the basis of community" (421).

Wolosky notes a deep ongoing skepticism throughout Whitman's prophetic corpus: "the America of Whitman's poem is not an actual

America already realized, but no more (and no less) than a promise of America, an America not yet attained but which the poem attempts to guard from despair" (363). What seemed, then, to be the summoning of the voice of majestic authority is often the sign of a great effort to join contraries, even at the expense of covering over the unresolvable contradiction of history—and this effort is undertaken to guard the poem, or the reader, from despair. While at first glance Whitman may be falling short of the rhetorical strength of biblical prophets like Isaiah and Ezekiel, this effortful, strained joining also reflects an important element of the biblical text. In fact, it is fitting to call these strained efforts "prophetic," since the great symmetries of the Hebrew prophets are often themselves transcriptions of the efforts of the redactors of the prophetic tradition to guard the communities living with those texts from the unremitting despair of catastrophic oracles. For example, the consoling remarriage described in Isaiah reframes and contextualizes earlier, terrible visions of divine punishment for a community that has already survived the catastrophe of national destruction and exile. Without a balance of destruction and redemption, metaphors of Jerusalem as a humiliated, punished prostitute cannot provide the doctrinal assurance necessary to hold together a community.[34]

Music against Consolation

If Whitman's prophetic effort is to guard against despair, as Wolosky would have it, Rob Halpern's *Music for Porn* suggests what an unguarded despair might look like. By "talking back" to Whitman, Halpern's work asks how a poet might generate a sense of hope, consolation, or even redemption, in our era of no-future, and without the certainties and complacencies of what Bundock calls the "historical will to harmony."[35] At the same time, however, Halpern's critique of Whitman, what he calls an "undoing," or an "untuning,"[36] is itself prophetic, exposing and deepening the fissures in Whitman's grand prophetic voice. While Halpern's work at first glance untunes Whitman by going flatly against his grand prophetic project, it also continues to unravel what was already unraveling, and more generally, as part

of a secret tradition of weak prophecy that unravels or untunes itself. Halpern suggests the possibility of a prophetic voice raised against consolation, against authority; he poses a weak prophecy, reconfiguring the prophetic tradition in Anglo-American poetry through rewriting Whitman's prophetic voice. This distorted echo of Whitman's prophetic voice enables Halpern to imagine a kind of wounded, flawed redemption.

In *Music for Porn,* Halpern places his own poetry consciously in Whitman's lineage. Like *Drum-Taps*, the book is focused on the nation in wartime, and particularly on the bodies of soldiers; the book's central preoccupation is the body of the American soldier returned from the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. As the object of homoerotic desire expressed in the speaker's pornographic fantasies, the soldier epitomizes America's fascination with a heroic, glossy version of war, though he is also made to embody the price of war's violence through his suffering and wounds, which constantly intrude into the erotic fantasy. Halpern writes, "I want to undo Whitman's militarized vision *democracy fulfilled* by betraying its perversity" (*MP* 56). At times, Halpern's poetry reads as a disturbing parody of *Drum-Taps,* such as when Whitman's image of a delicate flag in "Bathed in War's Perfume" becomes Halpern's "Delicate Rag" in a poem about the failure to truly see the soldier. In another example, Halpern seems to return to Whitman's "The Dresser," which describes an intimate act of nursing that crosses over, uncomfortably, perversely, into an erotic gaze. Whitman writes:

From the stump of the arm, the amputated hand,
I undo the clotted lint, remove the slough, wash off the matter and blood,
Back on his pillow the soldier bends with curv'd neck and side-falling head.
(*DT* 33)

While the explicit focus of the stanza is the soldier's fear of confronting his stump, Halpern's poetry redirects us to its implicit eroticization of soldiers' bodies in war. A short poem takes up the image of the soldier's stump: "Soldiers bodies gorgeous the / Thighs I want to gaze at them / What stumps old carbines be"" (*MP* 87). The opening tone of erotic praise, reminiscent of the most celebratory passages of

"Song of Myself," is here juxtaposed with the image of "stumps of carbines," suggesting violence, injury, dismemberment. The perverse eroticization of the soldier's amputated limb is made explicit in an earlier poem: "The situation's pretty unstable / Said my soldier with no hands / And I imagine his prosthetic // Up my ass" (*MP* 75). The obsessive identification with the image of the stump is self-consciously flagged in the opening section of the book: "Taking note of repetitions, I find myself treading the same terrain. Here comes that stump again, this time sutured to my elbow" (*MP* 7).

Music for Porn is a hybrid work, a mix of poetry and prose, consciously building on Miller's critique of Whitman's postwar poetry--Halpern acknowledges Miller's article in the idiosyncratic notes to the poem (*MP* 60). He writes against consolation, against the closure of Whitman's strong prophecy, especially as expressed in *Drum-Taps*. Whitman's vision, claims Halpern, is made possible by a sense that the war is over, that we are living after the carnage, but he critiques Whitman's poetics of closure, returning to what he calls Whitman's "unmastered remains" (*MP* 54). He imagines these remains as the "*emotive waste of a carnage that ought to be finished but is still beginning again and again and again*" (*MP* 54). In some sense, Whitman's wartime poetry is read as a kind of primal sin of American poetry: the emergent sound of Whitman's war is "a sound figure perhaps only fully realized in our own present" (*MP* 48). For Halpern, Americans, as the consumers of late-capitalism, are still under the sway and spell of Whitman's call to war which continues to haunt America, and continues to haunt Halpern: "this tuning has naturalized my ears, so I can't hear the noise any longer, a silence we might now call a completed sound, converging with its own suppression" (*MP* 49). In Halpern's view, Whitman's poetry of war is founded on an insidious kind of "tuning" of emotions into the music that justifies and gives meaning to war, at the same time suppressing protest. To return to Ostriker's terms, Whitman's poem becomes the soundtrack of war transformed as "spectacle, as pageantry, as tragic necessity." Though Whitman attends to the clash and tremor of the sounds of war, as well as to the complex emotions aroused by war, he is also "tuning" these sounds together into a harmonious whole; the

prophetic voice that rises over the carnage seems almost symphonic. *Drum-Taps* in particular marshals the affects of sympathy and homoerotic desire—"a certain unsingable tenderness for a dead soldier's body"—into abstract values, "*love of nation, fervor for democracy*" (*MP* 49). If Ostriker cannot forgive Whitman for holding dying soldiers in his arms and not going mad, Halpern cannot forgive Whitman for using "All my queer affections, like those aroused in Whitman's poems . . . *like sap like cum* to bind our national interests, even as I refuse them" (*MP* 52).

Halpern fashions his own voice and body against Whitman's in *Drum-Taps*, in what he calls an *undoing*, an *untuning*. Opposing himself to Whitman's symphonic voice, Halpern wants to make a sound of untuning, one that can expose the suppressions necessary to produce the voice of strong, redemptive prophecy. His method of "untuning" prophetic rhetoric includes close, pornographic attention to the male body of the U.S. soldier. The shock value of the material functions as an attempt to jolt readers out of the amnesiac lull of Whitman's "national mourning," as well as to awaken them from the more current amnesias of contemporary America's wars, which occur far from its territorial boundaries. Rather than celebrating the bodies of strong warriors, Halpern emphasizes the vulnerability of their bodies: "*what might it mean to give the body up to insecurity, vulnerability, risk?*" (*MP* 50).

In some sense, Halpern's focus on the physical details of wartime suffering follows in Whitman's footsteps. As Miller puts it, "the greatest strength of *Drum-Taps* in all versions is that even in his nearly compulsive efforts to celebrate a still-unified nation, Whitman represents powerfully the cause of war and the not altogether successfully repressed 'dripping and red' memories it leaves" (Miller 191). In addition to his poetry, Whitman's wartime nursing and the letters he writes to soldiers' families attempt to personalize the mass scale of the war and imbue it with empathy. By contrast, readers of *Music for Porn* remain in the dark about the correspondence between Halpern's language and any kind of embodied reality. Unlike Whitman's personalizing empathy, Halpern's vision fails to redeem the soldier's body and restore it to humanity. Rather than performing a visionary Ezekiel-

like resurrection of the fragments of soldier's bodies, binding them together into a whole, the speaker of *Music for Porn* single-mindedly focuses on fetishized body parts. His gaze remains alienated from the soldier: "he's my sick muse and deserves more compassion than I appear to offer, but he's already hardened into allegory" (*MP* 7). In the same section, he also writes: "I couldn't even tell you his name, tho a string of phonemes I can't pronounce fills my mouth like his dirty ejaculate, or glue" (*MP* 4). Throughout Halpern's book, Whitman's prophetic joining, his multivalent sense of "adhesiveness," is transformed into images of stickiness, congealment, abjection. As Sianne Ngai points out, "at every moment where we might expect *Music for Porn* to rescue this repeatedly abstracted and occulted body by insisting on its concreteness as object of the poet's lust, the description flips back into a testimony to its abstractness."[37] For Ngai, the book's power lies precisely in the way "this abstract allegorical body is incongruously presented as the visceral object of the poet's lust" (36).

Prophecy in Music for Porn

While *Music for Porn* explicitly marks its ties to Whitman, its ties to prophecy are buried deeper beneath the surface, less explicitly acknowledged by this highly self-reflexive text. The speaker seems far from visionary, stating, "my poems don't make more than the dimmest light, certainly not enough to see by" (*MP* 3). This dim light is contrasted with a consoling darkness that also helps constitute the pornographic world, "the dark theatre" of alienated erotic encounters with the allegorical soldier. (*MP* 12). Yet at the same time, there is a stubborn insistence, throughout Halpern's work, on the persistence of prophecy. "Darkness consoles . . . but it can't undo what conditions my vision" (*MP* 3). The future offered by Halpern's work is a kind of dark bricolage of utopias, a prophecy in the era of *Mad Max*: "I've assembled the following discreditable models, jerry-rigged mock ups of liquidated tense, negations of abandoned futures, making use of what I can" (8). Halpern's task is to generate prophetic vision from the failed utopias imagined in the past, "the world we've failed to make."[38] Like Whitman, Halpern also indirectly invokes Ezekiel's call

to prophecy. Despite the emptiness at the heart of the speaker's erotic fantasies of the soldier, what Ngai calls the "visceral abstraction" of the text, Halpern's "dark theatre" of pornographic allegory generates a certain qualified achievement:

> But I get off on knowing I can at least relate to invisible suffering, lend it some semblance of voice, and then eat the thing of which I sing, filling my depth, feeling common notions stirring, lost in this vessel of exchangeable options. (*MP* 6)

Woven together with the alienated language of porn, Halpern's prose here introduces prophetic intertextuality: namely, to Ezekiel's call narrative, in which the prophet is presented with a scroll, covered with words of "lamentations, and mourning, and woe" and is commanded by God to "eat this scroll . . . cause [his] belly to eat, and fill [his] bowels with this scroll," essentially to be penetrated by text (Ezek. 2:10–3:3). Like Ezekiel, Halpern's speaker eats text, consuming his own allegory, "eating the thing of which he sings" (*MP* 6). This eating "fills his depths," as opposed to the superficial penetration offered by the porn world, and the speaker is able to experience "common notions" (echoing Rich's "common language"), perhaps even the compassion that the suffering soldier deserves. This intertext from Ezekiel speaks to a radically embodied prophetic tradition. For the poet-prophet, Halpern seems to be saying, it is not enough to tune the instruments and sing a prophetic song: prophecy must penetrate the body. In fact, for Halpern, penetrability, especially via the queering of the masculine body, is a key element in what he calls (in reference to George Oppen) "the poetics of patiency"—a poetics founded on "receptivity, vulnerability, penetrability."[39] As Halpern puts it, "patiency is agency's inverse and complement: to actively become a patient of history is paradoxically, to will a suspension of an agency that has already been historically suspended" (*MP* 56). Halpern's poetry may be read as a recovery of a countertradition of embodied prophecy that has shadowed the construction of Western subjectivity, activating a rich storehouse of texts which use the weak body to address and resist hegemonies of state and empire.

Untuning the Notion of Prophecy

For Christopher Bundock, the prophecy of English Romanticism "works less to rebuild an edifice of legitimacy than to splay out history's fragmentation."[40] This paper has tried to show how parallel instabilities lie at the heart of the American prophetic tradition. Halpern's work helps to expose the fissures in Whitman's strong prophetic voice, posing an alternate model of poetry in the prophetic tradition, one that is destabilizing, unsettling, untuning—and that gives a redemptive value to patience, vulnerability, passivity, and weakness. Rather than imagining prophecy as a force that imposes an apocalyptic symmetry on psychological and historical processes, Halpern helps us emphasize prophecy as essentially destabilizing.

At first glance, Halpern's untuning of Whitman's war poetry can be read as a break from the Anglo-American prophetic tradition, an attempt to destabilize the authoritative voice constructed by the evocation of biblical prophecy, as well the comforting symmetries offered by the religious structures grafted onto American political life. In other words, Halpern seems to reject the prophetic tradition—its certainties, its bombast, its ties to patriotic nationalism. However through the development of an intimate, passionate conversation with Whitman's wartime poetry, Halpern exposes the instabilities, repressions, and fissures inherent in Whitman's project. Reading Whitman's prophetic imagery and revisions more closely, as Halpern's critique invites us to, reveals that Whitman's prophecy itself can no longer summon a voice of assurance, of authority, but rather expresses a dialectic of strength and weakness, certainty and despair. Furthermore, through this intimacy with Whitman, Halpern also comes to inherit the prophetic tradition, as a kind of prophetic countertradition, a potential carried through the Romantic poetry like a virus, or a kernel. Though Romantic tradition has tended to emphasize the prophet as a singular, towering genius, it also carries within it a radically embodied prophetic potential into Anglo-American poetry, and a voice fraught with fissures and stutters, shaped by anxiety and repression. Despite attempts to fix and define the prophetic role, whether as artistic genius or national emblem, it is the prophets' failures and weaknesses, their

inability to measure up to the prophetic ideal, that lie at the heart of both Whitman's and Halpern's visionary power.

University of Haifa
yosefaraz@gmail.com

NOTES

I am grateful to the Mandel Scholion Center at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem for providing valuable research time, to Ilana Pardes for her ongoing support of this project, and to Adi Gorbat for her insightful editing.

1 Alicia Ostriker, *Dancing at the Devil's Party: Essays on Poetry, Politics, and the Erotic* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 25. Thanks to Dara Barnat for calling my attention to this essay.

2 Whitman's *Drum-Taps* (New-York, 1865), a collection of poems composed primarily in response to the Civil War, was first published as a stand-alone book. Together with *Sequel to Drum-Taps,* Whitman sewed the reissued book into some issues of the 1867 *Leaves of Grass*. He subsequently revised the poem-cycle, with considerable omissions and changes in poem order, integrating it into the 1871 *Leaves of Grass*; Whitman included a reworked version of "Drum-Taps" in the 1881 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. The 1865 text is available on the *Walt Whitman Archive* (www.whitmanarchive.org), hereafter referred to as *DT*.

3 T. W. Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (Boston: Fields, Osgood, & Co., 1870), 34.

4 At one point, Whitman framed his poetic venture as the creation of a "New Bible." In a note from June 1857, he writes of "*The Construction* of the *New Bible*. / Not to be diverted from the principal object – the main life work – the Three Hundred & Sixty five" (*Notebooks and Unpublished Prose Manuscripts*, 6 vols., ed. Edward F. Grier [New York: New York University Press, 1984] 1:353).

5 Shira Wolosky, "Poetry and Public Discourse, 1820–1910," in Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Cambridge History of American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 4:413.

6 Herbert J. Levine, "'Song of Myself' as Whitman's American Bible," *Modern Language Quarterly* 48 (June 1987), 160.

7 Quoted in Clifton Joseph Furness, ed., *Walt Whitman's Workshop: A Collection of Unpublished Manuscripts* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), 67.

8 Ian Balfour, *The Rhetoric of Romantic Prophecy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 4.

9 M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1971), 12.

10 Abrams focuses, for example, on the secular recasting of what he calls "the apocalyptic marriage," described in the book of Revelation, itself a version of the sacred marriage celebrated in the end of the Book of Isaiah.

11 Christopher Bundock, "'And Thence from Jerusalems Ruins': Romantic Prophecy and the End(s) of History," *Literature Compass* 10 (2013), 3.

12 Bundock, *Romantic Prophecy and the Resistance to Historicism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 21.

13 See Jon Mee's *Dangerous Enthusiasm: William Blake and the Culture of Radicalism in the 1790s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) and *Romanticism, Enthusiasm, and Regulation: Poetics and the Policing of Culture in the Romantic Period* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); as well as Steven Goldsmith's *Unbuilding Jerusalem: Apocalypse and Romantic Representation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).

14 Maurice Blanchot, *The Book to Come*, translated by Charlotte Mandell (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 79.

15 The lecture, given in March of 1842, was later to be published in 1844 as "The Poet" in Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Essays: Second Series* (Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1844).

16 Whitman, *Walt Whitman's Selected Journalism*, ed. Douglas A. Noverr and Jason Stacy (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2015), 109.

17 Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (Brooklyn, New York, 1855), vi. Available on the *Whitman Archive*. Hereafter: *LG*1855.

18 Quoted in Franklin Benjamin Sanbon, "Reminiscent of Whitman," in *Whitman in His Own Time*, ed. Joel Myerson (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000), 144.

19 Stephen John Mack, *The Pragmatic Whitman: Reimagining American Democracy* (Iowa City: Iowa University Press, 2002), 7.

20 Emerson, "The Poet," 42.

21 Ed Folsom, "Week 19, Whitman and the Civil War," *WhitmanWeb*, iwp.uiowa.edu/whitmanweb/en.

22 Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (Boston: Thayer and Eldridge, 1860), 351. Hereafter: *LG*1860.

23 Lincoln, Abraham, "The First Inaugural Address," *Speeches and Letters of Abraham Lincoln, 1832-1865* (London, New York: J.M. Dent, E. P. Dutton, 1894), 165-174.

24 Folsom and Kenneth M. Price, *Re-Scripting Walt Whitman: An Introduction to His Life and Work* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), 15. Available on the *Whitman Archive*.

25 Whitman, *Prose Works 1892,* 2 vols., ed. Floyd Stovall (New York: New York University Press, 1963-1964), cited on p. 32 in Folsom and Price, *Re-Scripting Walt Whitman*, 80.

26 Whitman, *Notebooks and Unpublished Manuscripts*, 2:504.

27 All biblical translations are from the King James Version.

28 Folsom, "Week 19."

29 Betsy Erkkila, *Mixed Bloods and Other Crosses: Rethinking American Literature from the Revolution to the Culture Wars* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 144.

30 Ronald S. Hendel, *Remembering Abraham: Culture, Memory, and History in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), x.

31 Cristanne Miller, "Drum-Taps: Revisions and Reconciliation," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 26 (Spring 2009), 171–196.

32 Golden, Arthur. "The Obfuscations of Rhetoric: Whitman and the Visionary Experience," in *Walt Whitman: The Centennial Essays*, ed. Ed Folsom (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1994), 91.

33 M. Wynn. Thomas, "Whitman and the Dreams of Labor" in *Walt Whitman: The Centennial Essays*, 138.

34 Most scholars now acknowledge that the pseudepigraphical texts of Deutero-Isaiah (chapters 40–55) and Trito-Isaiah (55–66) were joined to the prophecies of Isaiah of Jerusalem centuries later. By collecting together texts from a span of at least two centuries, the redactors of Isaiah restructured the early dark prophecies of rebuke and punishment into a cycle of punishment and redemption. As Ronald Clements puts it, "the scribes who have preserved and ordered the various prophetic collections . . . sought to ensure that divine threats be followed and counterbalanced by divine promises" (*Old Testament Prophecy: From Oracles to Canon* [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996], 102.)

35 Bundock, "And Thence," 3.

36 Rob Halpern, *Music for Porn* (Callicoon, NY; Lebanon, NH: Nightboat, 2012), 49. Hereafter: *MP*.

37 Sianne Ngai, "Visceral Abstractions," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 21 (2015), 45.

38 Halpern, *Common Place* (Brooklyn, NY: Ugly Duckling Press, 2015), 31.

39 Halpern, "Becoming a Patient of History: George Oppen's Domesticity and the Relocation of Politics," *Chicago Review* 58 (Summer 2013), 55.

40 Bundock, *Romantic Prophecy*, 19.

A "RECONSTRUCTED SOCIOLOGY": *DEMOCRATIC VISTAS* AND THE AMERICAN SOCIAL SCIENCE MOVEMENT

TIMOTHY D. ROBBINS

In 1908, the *Vassar Miscellany* printed "Walt Whitman," an ostensibly run-of-the-mill essay from literature major Ruth Fulton. Identifying the "fundamental principle" of Whitman's poetry in its "application to the life and things of everyday," Fulton echoed the prevailing sentiment among US intellectuals, locating *Leaves of Grass* between poetry and critique.[1] At the same time, the ardent "disciples" and enthusiasts who had begun editing, circulating, and writing about Whitman in the waning years of the poet's life were not just securing his place at the center of the national literary canon in the coming century, but reconceiving his work as a unique kind of social theory.[2]

After graduating from Vassar, Fulton did what many of those same academics and activists did: she pursued her late interests in the social sciences. She studied with the biggest names in the emerging disciplines—Elsie Clews Parson, Franz Boas, and Margaret Mead—before making a name for herself, as Ruth Benedict, in anthropology. Her revolutionary *Patterns of Culture* (1934) set down the principles of the Culture and Personality School, which—describing human groups, or "cultures," as fluid but ultimately cohesive and consistent "pattern[s] of thought and action"—authorized the anthropologist to distill the native values of a community and to posit them (as Margaret Mead described it) as a kind of "personality-writ-large."[3] Fusing empirical studies and archetypal criticism, Benedict recombined the field's originary split between science and literature. It is hardly a surprise, then, that Benedict's juvenile literary criticism looked to the analytical prose of democracy's self-appointed poet. In *Democratic Vistas* (1871), Whitman, too, conceptualized "culture" and "personality" and contemplated their functions in a modern

society. Culture in "America,"—what could be called history's republican project—as Fulton explained via Whitman, was to take the form of a "'typical personality of character, eligible to the uses of the high average of men, and not restricted by conditions ineligible to the masses.'"[4] If, by the 1930s, Ruth Benedict had adopted "personality" and "culture" as core concepts when investigating the value systems of America's indigenous peoples, it was Whitman's *Democratic Vistas* that had placed the same terms at the center of a social theory for "American" Reconstruction. With the bloodshed of the Civil War still fresh, Whitman sought to invent a common tradition and a forward-looking vision; he did so by discarding the Victorian ideals of high "culture" for a democratic critique of his nation's cultural history. What Fulton felt in *Democratic Vistas*, then, were the intellectual embers soon to be rekindled as a modern social science, forged in the fires of the nineteenth-century reform movement[5] by the same name.

The vigorous debates surrounding the postbellum era's social issues—not just its fundamental "color problem,"[6] but the violent suppression of organized labor, the expansion of women's suffrage, the rampant political corruption, the development of corporate monopolies, the onset of mass immigration, etc. —often occurred within the new discursive framework arranged by "Social Science," a term that came to signify a movement of authors and activists influenced by the era's varied and interwoven currents of positivist, evolutionary, and socialist theories.

While *Democratic Vistas*, which Ed Folsom aptly describes as the poet's intervention "in the major social issues of his time," certainly reflects this political moment—when utopian mood was joined to professional knowledge—literary scholars have tended instead to accentuate the work's formal idiosyncrasies and grandiose rhetoric.[7] Though Whitman insisted that *Vistas* was the product of his "moral microscope,"—his ethical investigation of Gilded Age America—critics perceived the text as exhortation more than examination, an activist literature rather than a true social science (*DV* 14).

As a consequence, literary historians have often understood Whitman's only book-length treatment on "political and literary

subjects”[8] as something of an art-movement manifesto advocating for the need and potential of a dissident, participatory literature. But in the pages that follow, I hope to revive *Democratic Vistas* as a case study of early American social science, as well. Situating the text’s composition—from manuscript notes, source material, and pilot essays to its publication as an 84-page pamphlet—within the intellectual tendencies of Reconstruction-era social science reveals *Democratic Vistas* as an equally important document for the nascent discipline. In his program to cultivate a population of self-reliant, creative readers, Whitman examines the national histories of literary institutions; he meditates on the social reproduction of “taste” and its connections to political and economic power; and he conceives of a democratic reception theory based on a new ethics of reading, entering debates about the “best books” with the country’s newly professionalized class of librarians. Finally, I argue that, in linking the transmission, reception, and circulation of “culture” to the nation’s social evolution, Whitman laid the groundwork for that concept’s adoption by future sociologists, anthropologists, and activists at the turn of the twentieth century—with the young Ruth Benedict as the case in point.

Receiving Democratic Vistas

While Whitman always recognized his essays as an intervention into the era’s debates on democracy and culture, critics have long perceived a divide between *Democratic Vistas*’ lack of an applied science and the vague, often romantic poetics advanced in its place. This rift was established in the immediate aftermath of the publication of Whitman’s “Democracy,” the 1867 essay that became the basis for the ensuing book. Printed in *The Galaxy: A Magazine of Entertaining Reading* in response to Thomas Carlyle’s anti-democratic diatribe *Shooting Niagara: And After?* of the same year, “Democracy” addressed the social problems and corruption of the dawning Gilded Age by championing America’s liberal institutions as a political training ground for the working classes. Whitman located the reconciliation of North and South (and laborer and capitalist) in the cultural productions of

homegrown authors to come. Bronson Alcott—in his private journal—offered the lone enthusiastic reaction, celebrating Whitman's attack on the "thoughtless literature and Godless faith of this East."[9] More typical was the review found in the *Round Table*, which diminished Whitman's foray into political philosophy for, among other things, its curious absence of "the immediate present, between us and this splendid future," still "seething with the at least tangible and vivid problems that none show us how to escape."[10] These opening rounds effectively demarcate the text's larger reception history. For instance, Gay Wilson Allen, in his pioneering *Walt Whitman Handbook* (1940), acclaimed the spiritual politics of *Vistas*, finding in Whitman's essay "[d]emocracy as a moral and ethical ideal" rather than a "theory of the sovereignty of the people."[11] Harold Blodgett conceded that Whitman was "no analyzer of social problems" and only scanned those political theories which "supported his own idealism."[12] *Democratic Vistas*, then, was both defended as a democratic sermon against the nation's elitist, Anglo-influenced culture *and* reproached as the nebulous polemic of a literary dilettante.[13]

New Historicist renderings of Whitman's career, such as Alan Trachtenberg's *The Incorporation of America* (1982), Betsy Erkkila's *Walt Whitman: The Political Poet* (1989), and David Reynolds' *Walt Whitman's America* (1996) transformed *Democratic Vistas* into an incisive and timely critique of the period's political events and a contribution, albeit not always a serious one, to the history of democratic thought. The critical guideposts thus shifted from mystical speculation to the scenes of Whitman's everyday, just as scholars continue to resituate the text against the backgrounds of Gilded Age politics—on issues such as black suffrage, party politics, and organized labor.[14] Whitman's intellectual sources also received more thoughtful attention, with the influence of Hegel at the fore. Some came to regard *Democratic Vistas* as a kind of projection of the Absolute Idea onto the American scene, a presence reflected in the text's vacillating, vaguely "dialectical" structure, which Erkkila refers to as "Hegelian, working through oppositions and contradictions toward some higher synthesis."[15] Like initial commentators, later scholars were split on whether to understand Whitman's historically-staged narratives of

human culture—underwritten by nation and ethnicity—as a radical break from the democratic faith of his poetry or an extension of the poet's latent conservatism.[16]

But perhaps the most decisive turn in recent scholarship is the focus on Whitman's "programme of culture" for a democratizing United States.[17] Erkkila, for one, indicates that the politics of *Democratic Vistas* actually turn on Whitman's gestation of culture, which anticipated "postmodern investigations into the ideological bases of literature, literacy, and literary value."[18] A wave of texts came to focus on Whitman's cultural criticism as a counterpart to his political theory, positioning his essay along a spectrum of critical traditions from "redemptive instrumentalist" to proto-Pragmatist.[19] The most promising of these trends posits Whitman as something of an early theorist of reception studies. In *Walt Whitman and the American Reader*, Ezra Greenspan argues that in *Democratic Vistas* Whitman articulated the "participatory role to be played by the reader in the construction of the artifacts of culture."[20] More recently, James Perrin Warren demonstrates how Whitman attempted to "reconstruct" a democratic audience after the fractures of the war.[21] Morton Schoolman refers to the same practice as an "aesthetic education," where the reciprocity between authorship and reading might inspire mass audiences to "learn the possibilities for creativity available in a democratic society."[22] "Culture" in Whitman's American context, then–i.e., for democratic purposes–was necessarily social, a process governed by the cycles of production and reception and thus demanding sociological examination.

So while scholars such as Harold Aspiz reiterate that the Whitman of *Democratic Vistas* was "content to be a dreamer of the absolute and to subordinate sociological doctrine to poetic inspiration," to dismiss his text as merely utopian overlooks Whitman's sensitivity to contemporaneous rhetorics of reform.[23] Retracing the compositional history of *Democratic Vistas* demonstrates how even minor changes and additions made by Whitman suggest the presence of social science discourses. By updating and reframing the text in this manner, Whitman attempted to raise sociology to the visionary heights of "poetic inspiration," refusing to see any distance between

the everyday pragmatics of social science and the horizonal aspirations of his prophetic poetry.

"Democracy": Carlyle Contra "The People"

Although source material for *Democratic Vistas* is vast, the main force behind Whitman's original thesis was *Shooting Niagara: And After?*—the text that directly provoked the publication of "Democracy." Carlyle's essay was itself a response to Britain's passage of the Reform Act of 1867 extending suffrage rights to working-class men, which he portended would hasten civilization's demise. Carlyle went as far as to claim that, if anything, the United Kingdom ought to further circumscribe voting rights in an effort to stabilize social and moral authority among intellectuals.[24] Already unpopular in the northern U.S. as an opponent of the Civil War, Carlyle now condemned the product of Union victory, black suffrage, as the epitome of democracy's threat to natural order. His message reached America in an instant. Horace Greeley reprinted *Shooting Niagara* in the *Tribune* alongside an editorial remonstration, as did *Macmillan's Magazine*. The text was ultimately reissued as a pamphlet, further inciting American readers.

Francis and William Church, editors of the recently launched *Galaxy* magazine, a "New York rival to the *Atlantic Monthly*,"[25] sought a response to Carlyle, an apologia for America's democratic institutions. William Douglas O'Connor suggested Whitman, who obliged—despite personal admiration for Carlyle, the most referenced author in his oeuvre outside of Emerson[26]—and entered the fray with "Democracy," his "counterblast" to "Shooting Niagara" (*Corr* 1:341-42). Opposed to Carlyle's anxiety about the dissolution of the old social order, the opening lines of "Democracy" looked to that past to affirm the country's future, in the passage that forms the basis of Whitman's progressive historicism:

> America, filling the present with greatest deeds and problems, cheerfully accepting the past, including Feudalism (as, indeed, the present is but the legitimate birth of the past, including feudalism,) counts, as I reckon, for her justification and success, (for who, as yet, dare claims success?) almost entirely on the future.[27]

For Whitman, the extant success of U.S. democracy derived from the comparative fairness of its formal institutions. In actuality, though, "democracy" was an elusive, even aspirational ideal. It relied not only on the continuous expansion and practice of its principles to be achieved, but on the lessons of the mode of life and government which preceded it, "feudalism."

Britain, and the larger signifier "Europe," served as historical and cultural counterpoints here and throughout the development of *Democratic Vistas*. As America's "feudal" past, it had much to offer the nation's authors, for the "moral and political speculations of ages, long, long deferred, the Democratic-Republican principle, and the theory of development and perfection by voluntary standards" (3) were among the lessons derived from examining and understanding Europe and then integrating the useful and discarding the reactionary aspects of its outdated culture. This national-historical configuration, New World democracy as the product and adversary of European feudalism, offered Whitman a valuable rhetorical frame for his initial attempt at the genre of the Victorian social essay—and its canon of Carlyle, Arnold, Ruskin, and Mill. Whitman diverged from this refined tradition in style and organization. His circumlocuted, pivoting prose, and his structure, "a collection of memoranda, perhaps for future designers, comprehenders," produced an argument "open to the charge of one part contradicting another" (3). "Democracy" was insistently "not the result of studying up in political economy, but of the ordinary sense, observing, wandering among men," a sociology forged on the noisy streetcars of New York and the provisional infirmaries of Civil War battles (3). A collection of jottings and reshuffled notes, Whitman's social philosophy, naturally, contained multitudes.

Whitman's argument for republicanism rested not on its immanence, but with the law of history's progressive urge. Modern social and economic realities furnished states with a decision of linear proportions: either "look forward and democratize," or "lean back and monarchize."[28] Whitman admitted the difficulties of suffrage and integration and accepted the "well-wrought argument" of the "eminent and venerable" Carlyle (920). But he resolved present contradictions the way he always had, by projecting resolution into the

future. Traveling by "maps yet unmade" (923), Whitman concluded that his essay could only "throw forth a short direct or indirect suggestion of the premises of that other plan, in the new spirit, under the new forms, started here in our America" (920). "Democracy" never intended to outline a political program or social philosophy, or even "counterblast" Carlyle,[29] but only to recommend how citizens, especially those with a mind towards history and literature, could begin to develop self-prescribed principles of democracy within and against the stubborn resolve of feudalist values.

The problems facing Whitman's theory of America derived not from the pens of foreign critics, but from the internal fissures remaining from the war. Whitman recognized the urgency of the wide array of "social problems," and the central task of "Democracy" was to sketch out a cohesive social model based on the care and valor of the American populace. In a manuscript preface to "Democracy," Whitman wrote that the virtuous and duly sovereign subjects in the United States are "not as in other Lands, & in all the past residents in special Eminences of rulers or leaders," but in the "fair broad, limitless, average mass of the Common People" (*NUPM* 854). The coming-subject of the national community, introduced here as "the People," were to become the sustained focus of "Democracy" and *Democratic Vistas*. Indeed, by pitting this notional subject, the "People," against the "eminent" rulers of past systems, Whitman skirted Reconstruction's concrete issues of racial conflict.[30]

Yet this formulation, his projection of a national subject-to-be-filled, indicates how prescient Whitman was as a theorist and a rhetorician. In manuscript notes recorded alongside "Democracy," Whitman pondered that "with all the elements, promise, & certainty of a Democratic Nationality on the largest scales, & humanities en-masse, such as have yet existed only in dreams-a People" (*NUPM* 863-864). While the "People" are the subject of a democratic nation, they are but a historical creation, one forged from practice rather than treated as an abstract political category. Turning social criticism from policy to ontology, Whitman's theory sketched not what the "American People" want or need, but what they can aspire to be. His essay aimed to represent the "idea of that Something a man is,"

since potentiality, not only practicality, is vital to realizing the "revolutionary idea that the last, best dependence is to be upon Humanity itself."[31] This critical move in "Democracy," shifting attention from remedies for present governance to prospects of a harmonious future, aligned Whitman with the emerging field of cultural sociology. In the language of the social sciences, Whitman proposed developing "a fit, scientific estimate and reverent appreciation of the People," and he bemoaned that a model for "The People" did not yet exist as a literary–and thus a lived–possibility (921).

"The Labor Question" and the Advent of Sociology

To fully understand his seemingly utopian pleas for a "people" culture in *Democratic Vistas*' notes and essays, it is helpful to firmly situate Whitman's work in the milieu of the "Social Science" movement. In the US context, "Social Science" named the merger between the "scientific" theories of social life emanating from Europe—from Condorcet ("Science of Society"), St. Simon ("Science of Man"), Comte ("Sociology") and Fourier in France; to Mill, Spencer, and Carlyle in England; to the Left Hegelians in Germany—with the homegrown utopian and reform movements of mid-nineteenth-century America. Uniting these tendencies was the belief that through the efforts of observation and reason, social laws could be discovered and formulated—as in the natural sciences—to guide humans towards a more peaceful social order, absent poverty and alienation. The global project of sociology turned on the notion that humanity was the agent of its own history, that social institutions, norms, and actions were at least as responsible for the fate of an individual or a people as was divinity or nature. Social scientific thinking moved in tandem with a "modernist" notion of historicity—i.e., the idea that present circumstances comprised a radical break with the past. As historian Dorothy Ross explains, these nineteenth-century social philosophies originated "in an effort to understand the character and future of modern society … premised on a decisive difference between modern society and its feudal and ancient forerunners."[32] As with Whitman in *Democratic Vistas*, the earliest social scientists devoted much energy

to articulating the processes by which past social orders (feudalisms, monarchies, tribal societies) dissolved, chiefly as a means of theorizing substitutes: whether democracy, capitalism, socialism, or some combination therein. Now that history had become intelligible in terms of human actions, the laws of causation linking past, present, and future were likewise knowable. Underwriting the new faith in social progress, of course, was an expansion of the theory of evolution. In the nineteenth century, biological explanations (of reproductive success and environmental adaptation) were transposed into the social realm and figured among the main catalysts of historical development. And while Whitman culled his thoughts on evolution from a mélange of sources, including transcendentalism, German idealism, and various Eastern religions, he was receptive to any theory that conceived of social life according to patterns discernible through scientific study.

Whitman of course had his finger on the pulse of these debates even as he contrived a new career path as America's poet. As for sociology, which A. H. Halsey famously cast as the nineteenth-century's merger between "explanation and interpretation, between science and literature, between objective behaviour and subjective meaning,"[33] the United States was fertile ground for this new literary science of society. When the new social thought migrated to America by way of reprints, magazine reviews, and popular lectures, the ideas met favorably with Whitman's personal canon of anti-bureaucratic tastes—Emersonian transcendentalism, Tom Paine's radical deism, and the "Inner Light" doctrine of Quaker preacher Elias Hicks. But by the close of the Civil War, American "social science" had undergone a political facelift. The radical, utopian energies of the previous decades appeared frivolous in the face of rebuilding a war-torn nation with millions of new, formerly-enslaved citizens. In 1865, a group of New England reformers, scholars, and clergy—spearheaded by journalist and Whitman ally Franklin Benjamin Sanborn[34]—formed the American Social Science Association (ASSA) and the *Journal of Social Science*. These professionals were more conservative than the communal socialists of the antebellum period, but more goal-oriented than the liberal lyceum clubs of the same era. According to Jessie and Luther Bernard, ASSA sought "to develop a sound social theory on

the basis of which they might take practicable legislation"; as a result they represent the clearest precursors to the academic sociologists of the Progressive Era.[35]

Because of its frenetic intellectual and linguistic history, by the time Whitman was set to publish "Democracy" in 1867, "social science" seemed both nascent and pervasive—a part of established discourse, yet undefined. In autumn of that same year, the New York Congregationalist weekly *The Independent* even queried "What is social science"—this entity that seemed "necessary" to "practical existence." Was it a form of natural science, systematic and specialized, or was it like "the works of Walt Whitman, still waiting for an adequate description?"[36] It is telling that both *Leaves of Grass* and "social science" had to endure the political trials of the Gilded Age before receiving an adequate hearing. For in this period, Whitman and the self-defined social scientists engaged issues across the spectrum of social problems and through a range of genres and media—while increasingly looking to each other's works to forge new critical idioms.

It is in "Democracy" that Whitman begins to test the conceptual field of social science, hinting at the political stakes for this unique "science of the present and the future."[37] Following the Civil War, in the face of one of the most violently unequal economies in modern history, the issue most immediately pressing for "scientific" solutions was the omnipresent "labor question," and so the abolitionist lexicon was amended to these new realities. David Roediger explains that as the "popular working class consciousness that emerged during the later stages of the Civil War, especially in the North, saw the liberation of Black slaves as a model," a kind of tonal shift occurred, wherein the terrors of African slavery were transposed onto the miseries endured by (the mostly) white, industrial "wage-slaves."[38] Thus, as Whitman turned to the essay to consider the prospects of democracy, questions of labor and capital—for him—trumped issues of race.

Outside of Whitman's tragic erasure of the "color problem," when scholars look to his prose even for insights into political economy, they have often found its roaming, moralistic style an obstacle to the larger criticisms of Gilded Age capitalism. Richard Pascal, for

example, thought *Vistas* limited as an economic critique because Whitman privileged a "moralistic assessment of the state of the nation's soul" over and against "the more sociologically oriented view that a powerful and impersonal historical current is at work."[39] But Whitman was never in fact more explicit about the "depravity of the business classes" and the serious threats inequality posed to the country (*DV* 11-12). In "Democracy" he called the labor question a "yawning gulf" and a "danger" to "incarnated Democracy advancing, with the laboring classes at its back" (925). In 1871, he even added a footnote expanding on "the labor problem," a gulf "rapidly widening every year," and proving to be *the* "huge impedimenta of America's progress" (*DV* 71-72). Naturally, Whitman's solidarity was with the "decent working-people," the heroes of his future democracy who subsisted in misery with "nothing ahead and no owned homes [and] the increasing aggregation of capital in the hands of a few" (*DV* 71).

At the same moment, the "Social Science" movement was also engaging with the crises of economic exploitation, often in language reproduced by Whitman. For example, the *Galaxy*, just months prior to their publication of "Democracy," printed a tract by Marie Howland where she discussed the "broad and deep benevolence" of the champions of "Social Science," who saw the attainment of "not only comfortable, but even luxurious homes, for those who gain their bread by daily manual labor" as essential to social progress.[40] In 1871, the *Journal for Social Science* ran a position paper by William Strong arguing that sociology, in effect a "science of historical social progress," must accept as its pivotal question: "[h]ow is [labor] to be conducted in harmony with intellectual, moral, and physical advancement?"[41] As the social sciences admonished, Whitman too recognized that democracy, a system of moral and cultural values based on independence and participation, could never flourish under the oppressive weight of vast economic disparity. He figured that a certain basic level of security—namely that afforded to the property-owning middle-classes—was required to secure the potentials of "the People" and stave off social conflict.[42] As Whitman relocated critique of capitalism from the economic to the cultural sphere, he

argued that American workers must be allowed the time and space to re-create themselves independently of their work. The "true gravitation-hold of liberalism," he professed "will be a more universal ownership of property," and the "vast, intertwining reticulation of wealth."[43] While only a more just and egalitarian distribution—a "reticulating" network of prosperity—could secure the interrelated social organism of America's "great and varied nationality," that also depended upon a thriving national literature (928). As important to politics as a healthy and equal economic exchange was cultural commerce. Democracy, according to Whitman, not only demands "men and women with occupations, well-off, owners of houses and acres, and with cash in the bank" but with "cravings for literature" (927). If the population required self-gratifying stories and images focused on modern problems and personalities, they also needed to develop a taste for such portraits and narratives. So Whitman was compelled to rethink the interchange of "culture."

A Sociology of "The People"

To fully grasp the conditions in which this cultural criticism emerged, we must place *Democratic Vistas* at the multiple scenes of its composition, between Washington, D.C. and New York in the 1860s. In the "bohemian" years preceding the opening shots of the Civil War, Whitman was hard at work during the day as a journalist with the Brooklyn *Daily Times* and carousing with writers, actors, and artists at night in Pfaff's Cellar in Manhattan. In December of 1862, he abruptly departed New York to search for his allegedly injured brother George on the frontlines of northern Virginia. During the journey, he witnessed the grim toll the war took on the beautiful, athletic bodies he celebrated in verse. Whitman volunteered to care for wounded soldiers in the makeshift hospitals springing up around Washington, the city he remained in for the better part of the next decade.

Once in Washington, Whitman secured a clerk position at the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1865 through his friend, the Boston author and abolitionist William Douglas O'Connor. Following his infamous dismissal by department Secretary James Harlan, he landed

another government job soon after with O'Connor's friend, Attorney General James Speed. "The Good Gray Poet: A Vindication," O'Connor's defense of *Leaves* in the wake of the Harlan scandal, reinvented Whitman's literary identity, transforming him from "one of the roughs," the vagabond poet of New York's Bowery, into the compassionate nurse of wartime Washington, a wise and gentle bard of democracy.

The capital also changed rapidly in this period, undergoing massive development and centralization. The expansion of the Federal government during the war only intensified. Notwithstanding the renewed cultivation of Whitman's poetic celebrity in the late 1860s, he was, as Ed Folsom notes, "listed in the D.C. directory, not as a poet, but as one of the countless bureaucrats," an essential aspect of his postwar identity.[44] Whitman was joined in Washington by a deluge of writers and reformers, including O'Connor, John S. Burroughs, James Redpath, Henry Clapp, and Lester F. Ward,[45] among other radicals and bohemians who descended upon D.C. to work as government officials on the wings of the reform era's "institutional spirit."[46] This "spirit," as David Reynolds put it, oversaw the influx of associations pushing for practical improvements in government policy to mitigate social suffering and circumvent the more radical alternatives then receiving a hearing among the populace.

It was from the fountainhead of the new social science theories that Whitman fetched a notion for democracy as a "progressive conception," a kind of positive liberty he dubbed humanity's "Higher Progress.[47] For Whitman, once the country secured economic and political progress, the "respectability of labor" and the institutions to ensure that the population was "law-abiding, orderly and well off," it must set about the "true revolutions," those of the "interior life, and of the arts."[48] In fact, Whitman's own experiences in Washington act as something of a test case for how leisure might allow an individual to develop a sense of fullness, for the relatively free space and time afforded the poet to travel, write, read, and publish during his bureaucratic posts allowed him to make significant theoretical connections between leisure, labor, and culture.

In *The Evolution of Walt Whitman*, Roger Asselineau recounts

the poet's Washington years as a subtle transformation from beleaguered author to "happy bureaucrat."[49] Whitman had "never before been settled," according to Asselineau, bouncing between a variety of newspapers, professions, and properties before planting himself in the capital where he finally "consented to become a civil servant" (117). In a September 1868 letter to veteran Byron Sutherland, Whitman acknowledged his "excellent health" in Washington, a life of leisure that had left the poet "as fat and brown and bearded & sassy as ever."[50] There he enjoyed a steady income and a stable, less demanding work schedule, which gave him ample time to read, chat, walk about the town, and have dinner with friends, before returning to his warm, lit office in the evening to write.[51] Indeed, for Whitman, Washington proved a peculiar blend: a middle-class life purchased by the rigid hours and mundane realities of an actually-existing democracy.[52] This combination of leisure and funding permitted Whitman to become, for the first time, something of a professional writer. Due in part to the stir incited by the "Good Grey Poet," Whitman had never been more popular, and he began to "manage his career with the adroitness of a Gilded Age entrepreneur."[53] He published regularly in periodicals and anthologies,[54] and, according to Edward Grier, received "the rate paid by both the *Atlantic* and the *Galaxy* to well-established poets."[55] In constant epistolary exchanges with editors, Whitman sent off new pieces and negotiated prices and publication dates; his copyist's desk doubled as a professional office. The clerkship position also allowed Whitman to take regular leaves of absence to travel, specifically to New York where he could oversee his works' printing and sales. The essays that comprise *Democratic Vistas* are among the first pieces that Whitman composed absent the hectic pace of deadline journalism or the precariousness of a self-publishing poet.

Throughout the 1860s and 70s, Whitman was drawn to New York primarily to deal with family issues, publications, and real estate ventures. Peter J. Riley established Whitman as something of a land speculator in antebellum New York, connecting his dealings in the housing market to the aesthetics of *Leaves of Grass* to illustrate how the managerial aspects "involved in getting these structures off

the ground directly impinged upon the development of *Leaves*."[56] The reconception of Whitman as a real estate entrepreneur departs sharply from the typical portrait of the aspiring carpenter caught between the dynamic energies of market life and the bygone fantasies of artisan independence. Rejoining Whitman's actual work and leisure experiences—instead of class identity—to his poetics imbues the relative freedom he enjoyed as a bureaucrat with philosophical consequence, just as shuttling between New York and Washington shaped the absorptive, patchwork manner by which he composed *Democratic Vistas*.

Of course, it was the "crowds of the great cities" like New York and Washington which acted as models for the "People" Whitman had begun to articulate in "Democracy," where he reflected on mixing it up with "these interminable swarms of alert, turbulent, good-natured, independent citizens, mechanics, clerks, young persons."[57] Dissolving into and reemerging from the multitude was a process central to Whitman's poetry, embodied in the explorations of his searching, enigmatic "I."[58] Whitman reveled in losing himself in the intimate, physical connections across the swarm, but he also recognized each passerby as a unique figuration in a larger social tapestry, as a sociological profile. The crowds evoked in Whitman an amalgam of "dejection and amazement," as none of the country's "talented writers or speakers … have yet really spoken to this people, created a single image-making work for them,"[59] and since "taste, intelligence and culture, (so-called,) have been against the masses" historically, any American literary program must set the "ungrammatical, untidy" nature of the crowd[60] against "the feudal and dynastic world over there, with its personnel of lords and queens and courts."[61] With this stroke, Whitman linked literary form to social class and political virtue. Unlike aristocrats and capitalists, working people are disorderly like free verse, unfit for kings and court poets and even genteel writers and modern monopolists. Whitman again engaged with social relations in prose as he had in verse, by projecting reconciliation into the future, postulating class divisions as a grand cultural history departing from the caste systems of feudal Europe and advancing towards a middle-class, egalitarian future in the United States, when the working-class,

rough-and-tumble "crowds" were to finally become "The People."

"Personalism" and the Cultural Sciences

In May of 1867, just months before the publication of "Democracy," an ambitious devotee named Charles Wingate, a civil engineer and sanitation reformer, sent a letter to Whitman's office in Washington. Wingate aspired to be "a conscientious writer for the present American public," and asked Whitman of the "true need of the American people as regards literature."[62] The line of questioning sets up as something like a preemptive interview for *Democratic Vistas*. He asked, "in what way should the young writer seek to prepare himself" for American readers:

> Should he recur to the Past, and seek in the master's [sic] of Antiquity those grand ideas which though used by generations are not yet exhausted; should he study history and endeavor to gather from experience what the tendency & need of the world is of the present; shall he study the thinkers of the present, the Mills', Buckles', Spencers', Tennysons' etc and see what they have gathered as the results of past & present experiences or finally shall he abandon books altogether and plunging into the vortex of human life, strive by actual contact with the people to find what they desire, and how to supply their want?[63]

Whitman received this letter regarding the principles of a national literature at the very moment he was effectively answering the enquiries in prose. The catalog of alternatives posed above—to mimic the best of what has been said, to join in modern intellectual discussions, to document the desires of the people—represent the range of notions embodied by "culture" in the mid-nineteenth century, and Whitman moved between all of these diverse registers in the *Vistas* essays.

Three months after the publication of "Democracy," Whitman wrote to the Church brothers about preparations for a new essay, "Personalism." It sketched the "portrait of the ideal American of the future," by "overhaul[ing] the Culture theory, show[ing] its deficiencies, tested by any grand, practical Democratic test."[64] "Personalism" would shift focus from the ideal "People" and their absence in art to the processes of developing citizens' "personalities" through cultural reception. Here Whitman argued that in the republican future,

national literature would "furnish the materials and suggestions of personality for the women and men of that country, and enforce them in a thousand effective ways."[65] Literature was to replace the cultural custodians of the past, philosophers and the clergy, in shaping the identities of readers for the coming democratic society.

When Whitman stated his intention in "Personalism" to "overhaul the culture theory," i.e., to advance literature as both a normative and generative force, he was entering a debate raging on both sides of the Atlantic—chiefly in response to Matthew Arnold's recently-published *Culture and Anarchy*. Arnold's definition of culture as the "best which has been thought and said in the world" minted his work the *ur*-text of canonical elitism.[66] But what is too often lost in this sentiment is that Arnold's cultural program for the "pursuit of our total perfection" was, in practice, a reform-minded response to the various "social problems" of fin de siècle Britain.[67] His high Victorian critique of partisan politics and class conflict warned of the ill effects that "ordinary popular literature" could have on the uneducated masses (49). He argued, instead, that "men of culture," ethical liberals, must take it upon themselves to disseminate the "best knowledge and thought of the time," since only a long-term transformation could bring forth a peaceful "atmosphere of sweetness and light" (49). For Arnold, "culture" was the ultimate mediator; above politics, it deigned to support laborers not by abolishing class hierarchy, but by welcoming them into the fold through an appreciation of the art and ethics of the aristocracy.

The concept of "culture" thus became a political watchword in the late 1860s, and Arnold's work was widely discussed.[68] Whitman seized on the idea that culture could facilitate democratic progress. In the opening passage of "Personalism," however, he challenged Arnold's core tenets, for as culture was "now taught, accepted and carried out," it was "rapidly creating a class of supercilious infidels."[69] As far as Whitman could tell, Victorian culture had not produced the pursuit of "sweetness and light" that Arnold envisioned, but instead reproduced a hierarchy of arrogant cultural elites. Culture might be key to restoring moral order, but it could never just be handed down from above. Whitman's theory instead aspired to force a "radical

change," not necessarily to people themselves, but to the very category of culture – to extend to the nation a universal "programme" (524). His platform for cultural production and dissemination would reach farther than the refined "parlors or lecture-rooms," and focus instead on "practical life" and the "formation of a typical personality" for the "high average" of the masses (524). In his redefinition, authors or orators would only "supervise [culture], and promulge along with it, as deep, perhaps a deeper principle" (547). This "deeper" democratization of culture was twofold. First, it would center the stories and characters of average working lives in the United States. Second, to "supervise" and "promulge" culture, it would recognize and encourage the *telos* underpinning its operation and working itself out through historical political struggles. Here was culture not as a static syllabus of the finest written thoughts, but as an ever-changing process that "recast the types of highest personality from what the oriental, feudal, ecclesiastical worlds bequeath us," allowing modern authors and readers to "promulgate [their] own new standard, yet old enough" (546). For Whitman, culture produced usable pasts, modifying "the old, the perennial elements" of the arts to democratic practices (546)—which rooted him firmly in the yet-unnamed traditions of the cultural sciences.

In "Personalism," Whitman explained how the "cultural" sphere was the belated expression of the country's democratic condition, the third and final stage following the "political"—embodied in the Constitution and legal freedom—and the "economic"—resulting in America's technological advancement and relative prosperity. Finally, literature, the "native Expression spirit" of "American personalities," would facilitate an attitude of autonomy to match those formal expressions (*DV* 56). Literary critics have since hailed Whitman's perceptive grasp of cultural analysis, reading, as he did, the historical essence of political regimes articulated through their given media. John Stephen Mack explained that, for Whitman, literature was "always in service of political and historical needs"—a shrewd location of artistic value in everyday experience which even anticipated the aesthetics of John Dewey.[70] But while scholars have long linked Whitman's method to philosophies of his past (Hegel), present (Arnold), and future (Dewey),

there is, in retrospect, a continuous critical tradition that *Democratic Vistas* might also be said to belong to: the sociology of culture. This movement, born in the eighteenth century, organized by the nineteenth, and named in the twentieth, combined hermeneutics and aesthetics to "historicize" and examine national literatures.

As Raymond Williams explained in his landmark *Sociology of Culture*, this philosophical lineage–appraising politics through an era's cultural productions–sought to explain social change through periodic ruptures in aesthetic forms.[71] Whitman joined a distinguished roster, including John Ruskin, William Dilthey, Johan Herder, and, perhaps its principal matrix, Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico. While Vico (1668-1744) was a minor figure in the nineteenth-century canon (he was only later revived as a forerunner to modern sociology), his technique, outlined in the *New Science* (*Scienza Nuova*) in 1725, proved significant by reconstituting the study of metaphysics from abstract speculation to historical examination, setting the preconditions for writings like *Democratic Vistas*. As historians of sociology Jessie and Luther Bernard maintain, it was Vico who "uncovered the basic nature and function of culture by showing how one age perpetuates itself in the next and how each succeeding age transforms the past sufficiently to secure progress."[72] With the *New Science*, Vico endeavored to sketch "an ideal history traversed in time by the history of every nation, in its rise, progress… decline and fall."[73] As a consequence, his "new" scientific method replaced deduction and necessity, the core principles of philosophical rationalism, with inference and contingency. Existence was no longer depicted through purely speculative thought, but by observing the products of historically-lived experience—namely the stories human groups have told to and about themselves.

For Vico, civilizations evolved in recurrent cycles (*ricorso*), with each age displaying distinctive political and social features typified in the master tropes of their respective cultures. As a result, analysis in the *New Science* begins in ancient Greece with the epic poetry of Homer. Vico discerned the essential patterns of Greek national conduct, institutions, and traditions in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, narrative quests that came to represent the *zeitgeist* of the Greek

people; "Homer" was a synecdoche for their shared culture. The method ushered in by the *New Science* thus provides a valuable background for understanding *Democratic Vistas*. Again, Whitman's analysis emerged at the moment this kind of "science of society" was ingrained as the bedrock of reform movements, and *Vistas* not only parallels Vico's methodology, but often echoes his content, as in this passage from the 1871 pamphlet:

> the genius of Greece, and all the *sociology*, personality, politics and religion of those wonderful states, resided in their literature …, that what was afterwards the main support of European chivalry, the feudal, ecclesiastical, dynastic world over there—forming its osseous structure, holding it together for hundreds, thousands of years, preserving its flesh and bloom, giving it form, … and so saturating it in the conscious and unconscious blood, breed, belief, and intuitions of men, that it still prevails powerful to this day, in defiance of the mighty changes of time.[74]

The interesting use of the term "sociology" here—which Whitman employed in *Democratic Vistas* for the first time in print—grants the text a scientific-sounding authority, flagging the anthropological stage theory of development so in vogue in the nineteenth century, and, at this moment, attached most popularly to French philosopher Auguste Comte, the international "inventor" of sociology. History for Whitman was always progressive, even when progress involved the perpetual "return" of previous historical imagery. Phases of the past existed in the present as tokens of a former journey or pockets of resistance to the future, as when Carlyle voiced the last gasp of High Feudalism against the inevitability of democracy. The structures of feudalism that undergirded Shakespearean drama and the decadent monarchies that lurked behind the British Romantics supplied the resources against which political democracy would wrestle before adhering to new cultural forms. As stated in *Vistas*, all acceptable models of the past—from Egyptian gods to Adam and Eve to Goethe's Faust—though shaped by "orientalism, feudalism, through their long growth and culmination," are "bequeathed to America as studies," and must in a sense "return," or be re-read as egalitarian narratives and figures "typical of democracy" (*DV* 35).

Here one is reminded of the anthropologist Ruth Benedict—to whom *Democratic Vistas* was later bequeathed as a study in the cultural sciences—who, in *Patterns of Culture*, echoed Vico-*cum*-Whitman's idea that the historical succession of "great art-styles" occurs "also in cultures as a whole." Though focused on the customs of indigenous peoples, Benedict recognized that the fundamentally human "behavior directed towards getting a living, mating, warring, and worshipping the gods" depicted in art is also "made over into consistent patterns in accordance with unconscious canons of choice that develop within the culture."[75] In other words, the values and activities represented in the aesthetic field of a people are reflective of social norms and political desires developing in that culture more widely.

Whitman had this understanding of the historical agency of literary art at the back of his literary efforts even decades before *Democratic Vistas*. As an early outline of ideas for a potential "Poem of Wise Books"—or "Poem of the Library"—suggests, he was long scouring past "sociologies" for compositional strategies. At the top of that notebook page, Whitman listed:

Poem of Wise Books
Poem of the Library — (bring in all about the few leading books.

Literature of Egypt,
Assyria
Persia
Hindostan
Palestine
Greece—Pythagoras Plato—Socrates—Homer—Iliad Odyssey
Rome,—Virgil
Germany—Luther
Christ Bible Shakespeare Emerson Rousseau—(*NUPM* 266)

So a major theme of his late prose was already here in formation. Whitman's library poem looked to catalog a narrative of national histories and development, from the cradle of civilization to its republican progeny.

In this sense, Whitman recognized the political power of the "few leading books" and attempted to trace cultural evolution in its textual

deposits. After a break in the page, he planned the poem's completion:

> (Poem of the Library
> —first a respectful word to those who in ancient times, and in all times, in unknown nations, have written wise words, or taught them—/
> wisdom comes mostly back to the projecter, teller—no matter if no record—
> All my poems do. All I write I write to arouse in you a great personality.
> (*NUPM* 267)

Whitman allows cultural history to fill in even for the great ideas and stories not preserved in the library—those "unknown" to contemporary society. For Whitman, culture was not just the "best" of what has been recorded, but it involved a localized practice of "coming back," of "telling" and "projecting" in reception. In *Democratic Vistas*, he once again acknowledged that a modern literature made available to the people must "permeat[e] the whole mass of American mentality, taste, belief," so that it "radiat[es], beget[s] appropriate teachers, schools, manners" (*DV* 5-6). And these figures of "permeation" and "radiation" were already shifting the significance of "culture" from product to process, creation to reception, and from authors to readers.

Orbic Literature and a Sociology of Reading

A week before *Galaxy* was set to run "Personalism," Whitman sent the essay to be reviewed by Bronson Alcott, along with a letter promising "another article," this one "addressing itself mainly to the question of what kind of Literature we must seek, for our coming America… the three articles (to be gathered probably in book)" (*Corr* 2:29). We cannot be sure what Alcott or any other reader thought of Whitman's call to "the literary classes" (*Corr* 2:30), since the essay only made it into print as the conclusion of that then-probable book. According to Whitman, "Orbic Literature" would provide his most comprehensive theory on the relationship between politics and literature. As Burroughs revealed in a letter to a friend: with "Orbic Literature," Whitman was to "bring his heaviest guns to bear."[76]

Indeed, Whitman fired shots once more at the state of the union's literature, aiming the future of the republic on the cultivation of strong, independent readers. He first explicated the politics behind his concept of self-reliant reading in the "Orbic Literature" section, describing the "process of reading" as "an exercise, a gymnast's struggle," stating further that "the reader is to do something for himself, must be on the alert, must himself or herself construct indeed the poem, argument, history, metaphysical essay–the text furnishing the hints, the clue, the start or frame-work. Not the book needs so much to be the complete thing, but the reader of the book does."[77] A truly democratic culture does not turn on the intellectual elite, so its cultural theory must emphasize universal participation over passive representation. Whitman again solicited the Church brothers to print "Orbic Literature" in *Galaxy*, offering them exclusive rights to the "third & concluding" article. He overestimated demand, however, for despite his best attempts, the *Galaxy* turned it down.[78] So Whitman accepted his returned manuscript and went to work on the book.

Scholars seldom discuss this unpublished section of *Democratic Vistas*, although the essay, notes, and outlines exist in a variety of manuscript versions. Edward Grier assumed the text was simply inserted as the conclusion to the 1871 pamphlet. He contends "that the last twenty pages of *Democratic Vistas* . . . are practically identical with 'Orbic Literature.'"[79] More recently, Arthur Wrobel noted that while "textual variations are evident" in the several versions of *Vistas*, the "additions and deletions, however, are minor and do not alter Whitman's purpose."[80] These assessments trust that a text composed over a four-year stretch, pieced together from altered essays and reprocessed notes, was preconceived in its final form. As a result, critics have overlooked how some of the ostensibly minor changes made throughout the process reframe Whitman's project, or, in the very least, paint a fuller picture of its arrangement.

In fact, in the period following that rejection letter, Whitman added new quotes, data, and terminology from popular reform movements to emphasize the analytical nature of *Democratic Vistas*, and to imbue it with the cultural capital of a social science. I would argue that one such inclusion—Whitman's citation from the "librarian of

Congress in a paper read before the Social Science Convention at New York, October, 1869"—refashioned the essay to intervene explicitly in the period's major debates on literacy and "proper" reading (*DV* 67). The fourth annual convention of the Association took place more than a year after Church's rebuff, and the lecture cited on "The Public Libraries of the United States" no doubt enticed Whitman, as it received positive reviews in a number of national outlets before a full transcript of the conference proceedings was made available in the *Journal of Social Science*. Whitman might have imagined that in boosting the opinion of Ainsworth Rand Spofford, the head of the Library of Congress during Reconstruction and a respected authority on books and reading, he amplified his own theory of "gymnastic" reading on the pages that followed.[81] Spofford, a pioneer in public library organization and maintenance, published numerous guides on libraries, books, publishing, and reading; in the process, he helped shape the modern discipline of library science.

Spofford, though, was a lifelong and vociferous critic of Walt Whitman and his poetry, and their fraught relationship casts Whitman's citation as a curious one. Because of their history, Harold Aspiz suggests that the borrowed quote was "not relevant" to *Vistas*.[82] Yet its placement before the alleged "Orbic Literature" section cannot be insignificant: "The true question to ask respecting a book, is, *Has it helped any human Soul?*" Whitman swiftly expounds, calling it the "hint, [the] statement," that "the great literatus, his book," "are to be first tried by their art qualities, their image-forming talent," but to be considered "first-class works" only when "tried by their foundation in, and radiation … of the ethic principles, and eligibility to free, arouse, dilate" (*DV* 67). In other words, the value of a work is judged in its reception, in the effect on its readers. Form endows the initial experience, but literary and political success are gauged, in the end, at the level of sociology.

The Poetics of Public Libraries

The career trajectories of Whitman and Spofford—nineteenth-century America's prime poet and librarian—actually exhibit a number

of intersections and rifts, a testament to the sinuous nature of the period's own "culture wars." Spofford (1825-1908), born to a wealthy New Hampshire family, was raised on the intellectual currents of Boston abolitionism and Concord transcendentalism. After abbreviated studies at Amherst, he moved to Cincinnati, where he worked as editor of the *Cincinnati Daily Commercial* before opening a bookshop. Like Whitman, Spofford had decided mid-life to devote himself to literature. He organized a variety of reading groups and literary clubs, and even lured his intellectual hero Emerson out to Ohio for a lecture series during the 1850s. As a result of Spofford's diligence, Cincinnati grew into something of a western outpost for Transcendentalist thought, and Emerson, who apparently "enjoyed these experiences and profited financially from them," became Spofford's close friend.[83] As an editor and bookseller, Spofford assumed the role of a cultural ambassador to the West, mediating the mounting discussions over the fledgling institution of American literature. At the outbreak of the Civil War, he headed to Washington, D.C., as a war correspondent for the *Commercial* and soon after entered a post at the Library of Congress. He earned the position of Assistant Librarian in 1861 and, three years later, was tapped to head the Library. As a national steward of culture, Spofford promoted the idea that great literature and proper reading could suture the United States in the aftermath of war. He never shied from flexing institutional muscle to advocate for policy reform to this end.

But the postwar scene of national letters was a cultural battlefield of its own, and, for Spofford, Walt Whitman was prime target. Spofford published several attacks on Whitman and his work throughout the latter half of the century, a hostility Harold Aspiz traces to their mutual connections to Emerson—a sort of struggle over the future of Transcendentalist culture. Regional politics and social class played a decisive role in the clash as well. On the face of it, Whitman, the former Brooklyn-based printer from the lower middle class with a literary identity fashioned after the New York rough, jarred with Spofford, a cultivated, college-educated New England professional. In a somewhat stranger reality, while Whitman fancied the promise of a rustic, self-ruling West, he spent

virtually his entire life in the urban centers of the Mid-Atlantic. Spofford, on the other hand, worked tirelessly to retain a Brahmin cultural identity even as he set up shops in Ohio before returning east to work as a government bureaucrat. Above all of this, the major bone of contention for Spofford—one precept he never wavered on—was his puritanical morality, an ethics he faithfully policed as author and librarian.

Spofford was an impassioned and adversarial editor at the *Daily Commercial*, though his opinions were veiled behind a pseudonym used to attack politicians and authors: "Sigma."[84] In 1859, "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" received an acerbic review by this "Sigma," who assailed Whitman for lacking morals and form: "what we complain of in Walt Whitman, aside from that gross and obtrusive animalism which disgusts all intellectual men, is his utter contempt for expression, and the formless and apparently aimless character of his productions."[85] Spofford's appraisal spotlights what historian Carl Ostrowski calls the "ideology of reading," a moral movement among Gilded Age librarians to influence the reading habits of the American population.[86] According to Ostrowski, Spofford and other public librarians worked to "steer readers away from morally questionable or aesthetically inferior books and toward 'other and improving reading,'" often using the platforms of the social science movement to produce editorials, articles, and papers (72). And still, as dissimilar in taste and tone as two writers could be, in their will to cultivate good, morally-disciplined readers, Spofford and Whitman were wholly united.[87]

It should also come as no surprise that Whitman was drawn to reports from social science organizations, nor that he appropriated ideas from their articles to empower his conception of a democratic reading. The American Social Science Association (founded in 1865) was at the time steadily gaining favor among public intellectuals. The *Christian Advocate* celebrated its 1869 convention as a "people's university," praising especially "the well-known able librarian of Congress Mr. A. R. Spofford," whose lecture on the history of public libraries "contain[ed] valuable suggestions as to their contents, management, catalogue, etc."[88]

The potent blend of moral philosophy and scientific spirit on display in Spofford's lecture forecasted the creation of the American Library Association (ALA), the group that would institutionalize a new social science of reading—and, in the process, raise the figure of the public librarian to the height of Whitman's poet as a moral guide to the future of American letters. In 1876 the ALA was formally founded to "provide leadership for the development, promotion and improvement of library and information services."[89] The rhetoric undergirding the new profession was hoisted directly from the social sciences, and the references to development, improvement, and universal access were all the same slogans Whitman employed in *Democratic Vistas*. Wayne Wiegand stressed the shared pedigree and concerns joining the social sciences to the public library movement, claiming that the ALA "believed that public exposure to good literature would inevitably lead to a better informed, more orderly society."[90] Lora Dee Garrison contends that public librarians shared with social scientists the will to alleviate economic misery and re-instill a moral strength to the nation by "extending self-culture to the lowliest of Americans."[91] The first generation of professional librarians were, like Whitman, "reared in the period of optimism," as Garrison puts it, and thus took to librarianship with an evangelical zeal.[92] If Whitman's secular jeremiad posited the poet, the "divine literatus" (*DV* 6), as the moral savior of the degenerated Gilded Age, Spofford and his cohort saw the public librarian fulfilling the same role.

As the ALA branched from the American Social Science Association, it launched a magazine, *Library Journal*, held annual conventions, and printed technical manuals designed to influence reading habits and aid librarians. Melvil Dewey, a founding member, published a proclamation on "The Profession" in the journal's first volume, dreaming of the day when the librarian would "largely shape the reading, and through it, the thought of his whole community."[93] Samuel Green penned a similar piece on the librarian's cultural capital, admitting that while "it is important to have a democratic spirit in dealing with readers in popular libraries, the librarian is not, of course, to overlook the neglect of deference which is due him."[94] Dewey and Green's democratic authoritarianism crystallized a contra-

diction at the core of their altruism. Reading was democratic, open to all in principle; but the librarian, as the last bastion of good taste in a vulgarizing culture, functioned as an aristocrat in republican's clothes.

This political-cultural contradiction is at the very core of the era's "ideology of reading," which, as Wayne A. Weigand summarized, featured a number of creeds: "'read with purpose,' 'read systematically and widely,' [and] 'digest what you read,'" but always "'read with discrimination.'"[95] Indeed, Spofford was quite explicit when staking out his ground over cultural taste. He argued that "[l]ibrary providers are," like responsible guardians, "bound to furnish wholesome food for the minds of the young who resort to them for guidance"—"good taste" was inherently connected to "good morals."[96] Though, on its face, nothing could seem more foreign to Whitman's "gymnastic reading" than Spofford's ideology, Whitman's ideas for a national literature could sound, at times, equally moralistic. David Reynolds even impugned Whitman's "fantasy of a 'class of bards' taking over America" as "analogous to the conservative notion of the American Social Science Association that a chaotic America must be directed by so-called best men."[97] It is here, then, at the intersection of politics and morality, where Spofford and Whitman's allegedly inclusive principles are put to the test, and where a comparative review of their seemingly conflicting reading philosophies, in "Public Libraries of the United States" and *Democratic Vistas*, is illustrative.

Like *Democratic Vistas*, Spofford's brief history of the establishment of public libraries in the United States situated changing notions of literary value in a narrative of cultural development and national expansion. Most crucially, as the cited section suggests, both Spofford and Whitman were in accord on the basic issue: that the most important test for literature was its moral upshot. Spofford's account begins in the familiar language of frontier expansion, asserting that the country's initial libraries represented "the first ray of intelligence that streams from the world of letters upon the untrodden wilderness of America," before tracing the development of college and public donor libraries from settlements in colonial Virginia to Harvard College to the first public library created in New York

in 1700.[98] The narrative frame thus mirrored Whitman's cultural histories, both driven by illimitable progress. Spofford observed that New York's Society Library "migrated five times, improving its quarters with each removal," only to be outdone by the "gradual increase" of the Library of Philadelphia, begun with the "industry and zeal of the illustrious Franklin" (95-97). He buttressed these depictions of industry and growth with empirical surveys of the republic's leading libraries, which, as Spofford noted "exhibit[ed] a gratifying progress in all the larger collections and commemorating the more advanced and vigorous of the new libraries" (106). Just as Whitman staged the march of democracy through the political, economic, and cultural spheres of civilization, Spofford tied the advance of public libraries to the evolution of republicanism.

Betraying a certain national anxiety of the library's role as a cultural depository, Spofford also positioned Europe as the central antagonist to be usurped by American innovation. He lamented the "one great advantage [of] European libraries," that they contain "the stores of ancient literature which the accumulations of the past have given them," while U.S. establishments had "nothing at all as a basis" (105). Yet because American libraries contained "nothing" of ancient works, their catalogs and institutional visions were unavoidably modern. Spofford confessed that while "no library in America has yet reached 200,000 volumes, there are more than twenty in Europe," only to then qualify that these institutions are "merely repositories" of "medieval literature" (105). Librarians owed a certain deference to European cultures, but if the library's ultimate aim was to advance the interests of its patrons, then the United States represented a future with the space and resources to build themselves out from a scarcity of models, free from the burden of aristocratic values and types.

Concern with the here-and-now, coupled with the perpetual expansion and inclusion of American collections, imbued the history of public libraries with a democratic attitude, not unlike the principle at the heart of *Democratic Vistas*. For Whitman, economic and political freedom could be secured only through the cultivation of a self-proficient public. Spofford agreed to the extent that "public

books are just as important to the general welfare as public lamps," and thought libraries should be "open to the people as a matter of right" (108). The library was to be the modern agency charged with spreading democratic culture and developing a taste for literature among the populace. So he concluded with a call to expand the public system, for "creating libraries proceeds upon the principle that intellectual enlightenment is as much a concern of the local government as sanitary regulations or the public morality" (108). Spofford's lecture took after the *Vistas* essays in the rather conservative (though not necessarily elitist) notion that social reform must be more than legislative. It must take root and transform individuals in a way that only deep, proper reading habits could achieve. But that program was only possible if, as Whitman had indicated, the "category of culture" was universalized. Spofford finally surveyed the Library of Congress, which, in principle, was "freely open, as a library of reference and reading, to the whole people" (102). The nation's foremost library welcomed all books to its shelves and all readers to its rooms. Spofford took direct policy action based on this standard, too, supporting the national copyright deposit law of 1870, which secured for the Library of Congress all publications submitted for copyright protection in the country. As he defended the law in his lecture,

> the Library of the Government must become, sooner or later, a universal one. As the only library which is entitled to the benefit of the Copyright Law, by which one copy of each publication for which the Government grants an exclusive right must be deposited in the National Library, this collection must become annually more important as an exponent of the growth of American literature. (102)

Spofford looked to turn the public library into a training ground for a national literacy and literary tradition. The spirit of inclusion turned on his faith in reception to continually transform the significance of reading, since the "trash" of today may, "next year, turn out to have a wholly unexpected value" (111). Such conviction from the fiery adversary of indecent literature seems paradoxical, but what Spofford accepted here was the inevitability of historical contingency—the same that powered the cultural sciences, from Vico to Whitman.

In fact, Spofford applied the same ideals of cultural sociology to his library advocacy. Because all literature is "largely occupied with the questions of the day" it becomes "representative" to the extent that it "accurately reflects the spirit, the prejudices, and the personalities of a time which has passed into history" (99). Just as Whitman had delineated "culture," Spofford understood literature to be emblematic of an era's informing spirit. Echoing Whitman's justification for making cultural pasts usable, Spofford argued that in an inquiring liberal society, the "development of human intellect in any particular period" assumes a utilitarian consequence, and so "all books are, or may become, useful."[99] For Spofford and Whitman both, literature encased the intellectual spirit of the past as deposits of its cultural evolution (99).[100]

It was Whitman's deep appreciation for the historicity of reading that made his "culture theory" unique. In *Democratic Vistas,* the act of reading is intertwined in a grand narrative of culture, threading the practice through the nation's "bequeathed libraries" with their "countless shelves of volumes, records" containing "personal models of the past" (*DV* 76). In their immediate, humanistic response, perceptive readers recognize that imagery and stories "with reference to humanity under the feudal and oriental institutes" offer valuable "insight to ourselves," but that these representations, born from former epistemes, must still be "re-written, re-sung, re-stated, in terms consistent with the institution of these States" (*DV* 76-77). "Gymnastic reading" demanded practice and the persistence to reinvent culture from distant times and spaces within and for the contemporary moment.

Of course, Spofford also acknowledged that reading carried political implications—both timely and timeless in nature—since "those sentiments of human sympathy, justice, virtue, and freedom, which inspire the best poetry of all nations become sooner or later incarnated in their institutions."[101] Poetry, in particular, conveyed not only significant lessons to its readers, but had, through history, come to express the belief systems of a people. For his part, Spofford was willing to tread halfway with Whitman. He allowed for historical deviations in public "taste," but he made clear the kind of poetry he

saw fit (and unfit) for America's moral posterity during an address at the 1891 convention of the Modern Language Association—a lecture later published as "Characteristics of Style." From the then-forming national canon, Spofford extolled the "beautiful realism" of Whittier, the "vivid coloring" of Longfellow, and the "vivid imagination" of Poe, but once more derided Whitman.[102] He restated the cardinal sins of *Leaves of Grass* in form and in ethics, blasting the poet's "extraordinary rhapsodies upon man, nature and the world" and the "tedious categories or catalogs of animate or inanimate things," still assailing the "wanton breech of all the laws of reticence and modesty in his writing, his gross and defiant animalism" (20). *Leaves* lacked the aesthetic and virtuous qualities of an enduring literature—the reason, ultimately, that "the popular sense is just, which refuses to accept Walt Whitman as a great poet" (20). That the reading public shunned Whitman was proof enough that the filtering processes of good taste were a success and that no library—outside of the collection at Congress with its purely historical appeal—ought to be obliged to carry *Leaves of Grass* for its patrons.

While Spofford claimed the canon as meritocratic, he accepted librarians as the noble force elected to guide the system, Whitman, on the other hand, recognized "taste" was socially constituted and temporally provisional. In another notebook item, he deliberated: "[a]lways any great and original persons, teacher, inventor, artist or poet, must himself make the taste and by which only he will be appreciated or even received" (*NUPM* 149). Whitman perceived the irony of the public library's promise to act as both an inclusive repository and record of "culture," since, as an institution, it operated from a conservative cast of mind, safeguarding the best of what has been said, while warding off innovation. So as librarianship rose to the status of a social science during Reconstruction, Whitman designed a new piece demanding that libraries—the bodies now charged with preserving cultural traditions *and* fostering democratic attitudes—heed his work. "Shut not your Doors to me proud Libraries" first appeared in the 1865 *Drum-Taps* and was reprinted in the "Drum-Taps" section of the 1867 *Leaves*. In all versions, it commenced with an imperious yawp:

SHUT not your doors to me, proud libraries,
For that which was lacking among you all, yet needed most, I bring;
A book I have made for your dear sake, O soldiers,
And for you, O soul of man, and you, love of comrades;
The words of my book nothing, the life of it everything.[103]

Whitman once more assumed the voice of his book to commemorate the still fresh and profound sacrifices of the country's soldiers, to declaim America's literary value and political merit, and, finally, to enter his work into the incipient pantheon of national literature. He defied the librarians of the postbellum U.S. who might object to his aesthetic conventions. Presaging the ideals expressed in *Vistas*, Whitman suggested that form and content mean little compared to the "spiritual" life a book breathes into its readers, and vice versa.

The concluding lines celebrated the distance of Whitman's text from the learned tomes of library vaults and gestured towards his new sense of reading:

A book separate, not link'd with the rest, nor felt by the intellect;
But you will feel every word, O Libertad! arm'd Libertad!
It shall pass by the intellect to swim the sea, the air,
With joy with you, O soul of man. (8)

This verse again links the historical, America's internecine struggle for freedom dressed in an international flair (the Spanish "Libertad"), to the personal freedom of a reading practice which consciously circumvents textual representation. By the 1870 *Passage to India* (later incorporated into the 1871-72 *Leaves of Grass*), the poem had its title shortened, to "Shut Not Your Doors, &c.," received substantial edits, and moved from "Drum-Taps" to the book's final cluster, "Now Finale to the Shore" (in "Passage to India"). Of the many changes Whitman made to the work, the most crucial was to the final line, which now read simply: "The entrance of Man I sing."[104] Finally, for Whitman, this was the song of democratic possibilities, a tune outlined here but composed in the future. He reinforced this formulation in *Democratic Vistas*, proclaiming that in "long ages hence, shall the due historian or critic" be able to write "an equal history for the democratic principle," for, at that moment, democracy will have

"fashioned, systematized, and triumphantly finished and carried out, in its own interest, and with unparalleled success, a New Earth and a New Man" (*DV* 34).

Conclusion

When Whitman's democratic theory reached the next century through the pen of then Vassar undergraduate Ruth Fulton, she received and emphatically "returned" his message. She affirmed that the "theme of Democracy, from the very vagueness of its thought, is one which is admirably fitted to Whitman's swelling phrases."[105] While Fulton was crafting her essay on Whitman, she made a convenient new acquaintance: the distinguished naturalist and old Whitman comrade, John Burroughs. Burroughs was living in upstate New York, just across the Hudson River from Vassar. He was acting mentor to the Wake Robin Club, a Vassar group dedicated to environmental studies, and he often invited Fulton and other students to the countryside cabin where he examined native fauna, farmed various crops, and composed much of his nature writing.

Perhaps Burroughs, after learning of a budding literary scholar at work on a Whitman piece for the school paper, alerted her to "Walt Whitman and His 'Drum Taps,'" an 1866 review where he too ruminated on the vital connections Whitman made between the universal ideal of a democratic culture and the individual development of one's personality. Burroughs argued that, in his poetry, Whitman "uses himself, as an illustration of the character upon which his book is predicated, and which he believes to be typical of the American of the future."[106] If Burroughs equipped future readers for Whitman's premature verse, Fulton may have absorbed the methods of his self-constructed personality so fully as to set the groundwork for her forthcoming anthropology. In the seminal *Patterns of Culture*, when Fulton postulated a "great arc of potential human purposes" from which cultures formed the principles of their particular personalities, she was, in a sense, revolutionizing Whitman's claims in *Democratic Vistas* for a social science progressively global in its scope.[107] Before basically founding the field

of modern anthropology as Ruth Benedict, the young Fulton had already decided that Whitman's "influence is profound," because his book satisfied that "true test" of culture: it "stirs our highest emotions, widens the circle of things beautiful, and calls into play the forces of our moral natures."[108] Although contemporary scholars continue to discuss the ample and profound influences of Whitman's reception among his "poets to come," a fascinating thread remains between the methods of this poet and the coming social sciences.

Graceland University
timothy.robbins@graceland.edu

NOTES

1 Ruth Fulton, "Walt Whitman," *Vassar Miscellany* 37 (March 1908), 304.

2 Michael Robertson termed this "large, diverse, loosely affiliated international group" of Whitman supporters "disciples," as they encountered Whitman's words as prophecy more than poetry (*Worshipping Walt: The Whitman Disciples* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008], 5). In a related article, Robertson described the disciples' official body—the Walt Whitman Fellowship International—as a space for a "significant number of North American cultural radicals" to hone the concepts associated with the politics of the Progressive Era ("Reading Poetry Religiously: The Walt Whitman Fellowship and Seeker Spirituality," *American Religious Liberalism*, ed. Leigh E. Schmidt and Sally M. Promey [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012], 18). Thus, around Whitman's name formed a network of veterans from the era's social movements, including NAACP co-founder William English Walling, anarchist radical Emma Goldman, civil rights lawyer Clarence Darrow, and sociologist Robert Park. For a thorough reception of Whitman's influence on the American left, see Bryan Garman, *Race of Singers: Whitman's Working Class Hero from Guthrie to Springsteen*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

3 Margaret Mead, "Preface," from *Patterns of Culture* by Ruth Benedict (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1934), xiii.

4 Whitman, in Fulton, 306-307.

5 In the definitive history of the discipline, Luther and Jessie Bernard describe the "Social Science Movement" as the "mobilization by individuals seeking to use scientific method to solve the social problems resulting from industrialization" based upon the ideas of positivism, evolution, physiology, and Associationism, and arising from the scholarship of figures like Auguste Comte, Charles Fourier,

Thomas Carlyle, and Herbert Spencer (*Origins of American Sociology: The Social Science Movement in the United States* [New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1943], 3).

6 The "color problem" was a common, shorthand phrase used by social commentators to refer to how previously enslaved people would be incorporated into the nation following emancipation.

7 Ed Folsom, "The Vistas of *Democratic Vistas*," in Walt Whitman, *Democratic Vistas: The Original Edition in Facsimile*, ed. Ed Folsom (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010), xxxv. Hereafter *DV*.

8 Whitman, *The Correspondence*, 6 vols., ed. Edwin Haviland Miller (New York: New York University Press, 1961-1977), 2:38-39. Hereafter *Corr*. For more on *Democratic Vistas* as a call for a new democratic culture, see, for example, John Stephen Mack's *The Pragmatic Whitman: Reimagining American Democracy* , Joli Jensen's *Is Art Good for Us?: Beliefs about High Culture in American Life*, and James Perrin Warren's piece "Reconstructing Language in Democratic Vistas" in *Walt Whitman: The Centennial Essays*, ed. Ed Folsom (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1994).

9 Bronson Alcott, *The Journals of Bronson Alcott*, ed. Odell Shepard (Boston: Little, Brown, 1938), 391.

10 "Walt Whitman's Utopia," *The Round Table: A Saturday Review of Politics, Finance, Literature, Society and Art* 6 (December 7, 1867), 370-371.

11 Gay Wilson Allen, *The New Walt Whitman Handbook* (New York: New York University Press, 1975), 130.

12 Harold W. Blodgett, "Democratic Vistas—100 Years After," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft in der amerikanischen Literatur*, ed. Karl Schubert and Ursula Müller-Richter (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1975), 128.

13 For an extensive survey of the text's critical reception, see Folsom's introduction, "The Vistas of *Democratic Vistas*," in *DV* xv-lxvii.

14 On the question of black suffrage, Luke Mancuso contends that *Democratic Vistas* was "symptomatic of the larger cultural debates over the extension of the franchise . . . prior to the passage of the Fifteenth amendment" (*The Strange Sad War Revolving: Walt Whitman, Reconstruction, and the Emergence of Black Citizenship*, [Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1997], 53-54). On the distinctive systems of governance, between republicanism and federalism, Scott Henkel restages the Whitman-Carlyle exchange as the "two competing values undercut[ting] or undergirding our ideas about democracy," where Whitman argues for a "more direct democracy" ("Leaves of Grassroots Politics: Whitman, Carlyle, and the Imagination of Democratic Vistas." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 27 [Winter 2010], 102-103). On *Democratic Vistas*' relationship to nineteenth-century labor movements, Benjamin Kline Hunnicut claims that Whitman "offered unique insights, compiling lists of specific free activities that might ac-

tually constitute 'a nobler culture'" ("Walt Whitman's 'Higher Progress' and Shorter Work Hours," *WWQR* 26 [Fall 2008], 93).

15 Besty Erkkila, *Walt Whitman: The Political Poet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 248.

16 Blodgett stressed Whitman's reliance on "Hegel, in whose philosophy he found the reassurance that evil is always in process of losing its identity in the Absolute Good" (128), as did Reynolds, who contended that after the war Whitman "looked to outside systems such as Hegelian philosophy to resolve problems he had formerly tried to resolve in his poetry" (*Walt Whitman's America*, 450). More recently, Thomas Haddox argued that "Whitman's growing interest in the philosophy of Hegel, particularly evident in *Democratic Vistas*, suggests that he believes history in any meaningful sense to be at an end, . . . a position all too amenable to conservatism and complacency" ("Whitman's End of History: 'As I sat Alone by Blue Ontario's Shore,' *Democratic Vistas*, and the Postbellum Politics of Nostalgia," *WWQR* 22 [Summer 2004], 4).

17 *DV* 40.

18 Erkkila, 252.

19 Art historian Joli Jensen considers *DV* a theory of "redemptive art," which she calls "instrumental" since Whitman imagined "that the arts have the power to transform individuals (and thereby society) only if we want and need something very different from what they already are" (*Is Art Good for Us?: Beliefs about High Culture in American Life* [New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002], 30). John Stephen Mack explains how, for Whitman, imaginative literature's role is to "promulgate the cultural assumptions that govern social life" (*The Pragmatic Whitman: Reimagining American Democracy* [Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002], 137).

20 Ezra Greenspan, *Walt Whitman and the American Reader* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 112.

21 James Perrin Warren, "Reconstructing Language in Democratic Vistas," *Walt Whitman: The Centennial Essays*, 82.

22 Morton Schoolman, *Reason and Horror: Critical Theory, Democracy, and Aesthetic Individuality* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 238.

23 Harold Aspiz, "The Body Politic in *Democratic Vistas*," in Folsom, ed., *Walt Whitman: The Centennial Essays*, 105.

24 As the epitome of Britain's intellectual elite, Carlyle wished "the entire Population could be thoroughly drilled; into cooperative movement, into individual behavior, correct, precise, and at once habitual and orderly" (*Shooting Niagara: And After?* [London: Chapman and Hall], 46).

25 Edward F. Grier, "Walt Whitman, the Galaxy, and Democratic Vistas,"

American Literature 23 (November 1951), 332.

26 Alice L. Cooke, "Walt Whitman as a Critic: Democratic Vistas with Special Reference to Carlyle," *Walt Whitman Newsletter* 4 (1958), 94-95.

27 Whitman, "Democracy," *The Galaxy: A Magazine of Entertaining Reading* (December 1867), 920.

28 Whitman, "Democracy," 927.

29 Whitman showed persistent deference to Carlyle in the text's notes. In manuscript drafts of "Democracy," he disclosed that his article was "not by any means intended as a formal rejoinder & answer to Mr. Carlyle," since the latter had simply "presented his plan of repair,—his idea of strengthening, & revivifying" (*Notebooks and Unpublished Prose Manuscripts*, ed. Edward F. Grier [New York: New York University Press, 1984], 854). Hereafter, *NUPM*. In the 1871 pamphlet, Whitman excised the passages attacking Carlyle and softened the satire critical of *Shooting Niagara*. He also included a footnote to reiterate his original agreement, confessing that he was "roused to much anger" by Carlyle's insults of the "theory of America," but, after reflection, saw "Shooting Niagara" as a study of "judgments from the highest feudal point of view" (*DV* 18).

30 Whitman mocked Carlyle's alarmist tone regarding the unpreparedness of the "Nigger Cushee," the democratic dangers of "swarmery," and the "Niagara leap" of emancipation, and he rebuked the rhetoric of "Shooting Niagara" as "comic-painful hullabaloo and vituperative cat-squalling" ("Democracy," 926). Yet, while Carlyle's essay criticized the United States for black suffrage, Whitman's "Democracy" was tragically quiet on voting rights and racial equality; see Folsom, "Vistas," in *DV.*

31 Whitman, "Democracy," 919.

32 Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 3.

33 A.H. Halsey, *A History of Sociology in Britain: Science, Literature, and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 7.

34 Sanborn, a committed abolitionist, was a career reformer with deep roots in American Transcendentalism. Following the war, he organized ASSA conventions, edited the *Journal of Social Science*, and became friends and correspondents with Whitman. By the end of the nineteenth century, Sanborn became a staunch defender of labor rights and a proponent of Horace Traubel's ethical socialism. He brandished his radical credentials by publishing a number of articles on Whitman for the *Conservator*, like "Whitman's Example in American Society," where he seized on the poet's biography to criticize monopoly capitalism and the "snobbish and wholly un-American pursuit and enjoyment of material wealth [in] our dwindling and Mammon-worshiping age" ("Whitman's Example in American Society," *Conserving Walt Whitman's Fame: Selections from Horace Traubel's the*

Conservator, 1890-1919, ed. Gary Schmidgall [Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006], 176). Thus, Sanborn's politics matured along with Whitman's body of work.

35 L.L. and Jessie Bernard, 527.

36 "Social Science," *The Independent. Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies, History, Literature, and the Arts* (October 24, 1867), 4.

37 Whitman, "Democracy," 926.

38 David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991), 175-176.

39 Richard Pascal, "'Dimes on the Eyes': Walt Whitman and the Pursuit of Wealth in America," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 44 (September 1989), 146.

40 Marie Howland, "Possibilities of Economy," *The Galaxy* 1 (August 15, 1866), 720.

41 William T. Strong, "The Study of Social Science," *Journal of Social Science, Containing the Proceedings of the American Association* 4 (1871), 1.

42 Of course, Whitman's most intensive engagement with labor struggles came in a never-delivered lecture written in the late 1860s, "The Tramp and Strike Questions." There he repeated that the era's pressing issue was "not the abstract question of democracy, but of social and economic organization, the treatment of working-people by employers." Whitman positioned the country's affluent monopolists against "the People" and mapped these social coordinates on to his accustomed national-historical thesis, asserting that: "in Europe the wealth of to-day mainly results from, and represents, the rapine, murder, outrages, treachery, hoggishness, of hundreds of years ago," a legacy of inequality encroaching on the American present. To defend workers' rights was to protect a cultural principle transferred through state histories. Whitman restaged the conflict between capital and labor as that of the British monarchy against the country's founders, asserting that the "American Revolution of 1776 was simply a great strike." Reforming the corrupted conditions of the Gilded Age economy was not just a matter of restoring the lost values of American republicanism, but of rejecting the invading features of the monarchical past (Whitman, *Poetry and Prose*, ed. Justin Kaplan [New York: Library of America, 1996], 1088-1089).

43 Whitman, "Democracy," 928.

44 Folsom in *DV*, xxxi.

45 Lester Frank Ward, considered the "father" of American sociology, published the groundbreaking *Dynamic Sociology* (1883) during his time in Washington. Ward, who became the first president of the American Sociological Association in 1906, picked up *Leaves of Grass* late in life, and he apparently found Whitman to

be a "man of fearless thought" (Emily Palmer Cape, *Lester F. Ward, A Personal Sketch* [New York: G.P. Putnam's and Sons, 1922], 53). Cultural historian Van Wyck Brooks imagined Whitman's poetry among the first places where sociologists-to-come like Ward encountered the idea of evolution. He maintains that Whitman "absorbed the discoveries of science and the dawning conception of evolution, of the gradual emergence of life from the primitive chaos," transmuting them into "the feeling of 'cosmic continuity' that was much in the air of the time and largely inspired the sociology of Lester F. Ward" (*The Times of Melville and Whitman*, [New York: E. P. Dutton, 1947], 177, 184).

46 Reynolds, 451, 455.

47 *DV* 56.

48 *DV* 56-57.

49 Roger Asselineau, *The Evolution of Walt Whitman* (Iowa City: University Of Iowa Press, 1999), 177.

50 *Corr* 2:44-45.

51 As an Interior Department copyist, he started at a salary of $1,200 per year, which was raised to $1,600 in 1866 (Reynolds, 455, 475).

52 When Whitman wrote to New Yorkers in this period, he often documented the monotony of Washington life with afflicted gratitude. In a letter to Anson Ryder, Whitman indicated that he was "leading a quiet, monotonous life, working a few hours every day very moderately" (*Corr* 2:76). In a note to Alfred Pratt, he admitted "nothing very new" or exciting in D.C. now that "the war is over" (*Corr* 1:345-46). His internal conflict surfaced in a pair of letters to Abby Price, one where he depicted office labor as "very monotonous" (*Corr* 2:83), in another he confessed to find work "mild & agreeable, & the place one remarkably well suited to a lazy, elderly, literary gentleman" (*Corr* 1:318). In letters to "Broadway" Jack Flood, a streetcar conductor, Whitman complained that D.C. was "quite small potatoes" and "a stupid place compared to New York," and even though he enjoyed "plenty of leisure time" to take in the "large & grand" government buildings and "fine scenery around Washington," he admitted that "the oceans of life & people" were ultimately "lacking here" (*Corr* 2:69-70, 74-75).

53 Reynolds, 450.

54 Asselineau, 177-179.

55 Grier, "Walt Whitman," 336.

56 Peter J. Riley, "*Leaves of Grass* and Real Estate," *WWQR* 28 (Spring 2011), 164.

57 Whitman, "Democracy," 930.

58 For a discussion of *Leaves of Grass*'s parallels to nineteenth-century "crowd

psychology," the offshoot of evolutionary biology and social science, see Christian Borch, "Body to Body: On the Political Anatomy of Crowds," *Sociological Theory* 27 (September 2009), 271-290.5

59 Whitman, "Democracy," 930.

60 It was this aspect of the "People" that gave Carlyle fits, but also rankled contemporary reviewers. The *Round Table* chastised Whitman for overstating the heroic tendencies of the "People," and for neglecting to mention the "spitting, swearing, roaring, reeking, reeling ruffians that fill our streets" and, even worse, "our polls on elections" ("Walt Whitman's Utopia," 370).

61 Whitman, "Democracy," 920.

62 Charles F. Wingate to Walt Whitman, May 19, 1867. Available on the *Walt Whitman Archive* (www.whitmanarchive.org, ID: loc.02001).

63 "Charles F. Wingate to Walt Whitman."

64 *Corr* 2:18.

65 Whitman, "Personalism," *The Galaxy* 5 (May 1868), 540.

66 Mathew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism* (Smith, Elder, and Company: London, 1869), viii.

67 Arnold, viii.

68 *The Radical* published a particularly notable review, in that it placed *Culture and Anarchy* in the context of American politics, virtually duplicating the language and tone of Whitman's "overhaul." The author proposed that a democratic society must reconsider the "problem of culture in its more positive aspects," since only a culture "[a]pplied to human nature in the present age," could "mark the advent of the PEOPLE," and spread broadly the "belief that every life has a value that can be increased" ("Culture," *The Radical* 1 [1868], 336).

69 Whitman, "Personalism," 542.

70 Mack, 139.

71 Raymond Williams, *Sociology of Culture* (New York: Schocken Books, 1982), 20-21.

72 L.L. and Jessie Bernard, 21.

73 Giambattista Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico. Translated from the Third Edition (1744)*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1948), 348-349.

74 *DV* 7, italics mine.

75 Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, 48.

76 Clara Barrus, *Whitman and Burroughs: Comrades* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin,

1931), quoted on 51.

77 *DV* 76.

78 Amusingly, Church blamed poor timing in the rejection notice, avowing that the July issue "ought to be a light number for Summer reading: this is an article that requires thought; cannot be read on cars &c, & ought to appear in soberer weather" (Francis P. Church to Walt Whitman, May 15, 1868. Available on the *Whitman Archive*. [*WWA* ID: loc.01288]).

79 Grier, "Walt Whitman," 347.

80 Arthur Wrobel, "Democratic Vistas," in *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia*, ed. J.R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 176.

81 Here I am employing Whitman's understanding from *Democratic Vistas*—discussed on the previous page—that reading, in its "highest sense," is a "a gymnast's struggle" capable of forming "a nation of supple and athletic minds, well-train'd, intuitive, used to depend on themselves, and not on a few coteries of writers" as a new theory of literacy, referred to as "gymnastic reading" hereafter (*DV* 76).

82 Harold Aspiz, "Whitman's Literary Enemy: A. R. Spofford," *Walt Whitman Review* 28 (June-December 1982), 94.

83 Aspiz, "Whitman's Literary Enemy," 92.

84 John Y. Cole, ed., *Ainsworth Spofford: Bookman and Librarian* (Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1977), 29.

85 Sigma, in Carl Ostrowski, "'The Choice of Books': Ainsworth Rand Spofford, the Ideology of Reading, and Literary Collections at the Library of Congress in the 1870s," *Libraries & the Cultural Record* 45.1 (2010), 70. Recognizing any press as good press, Whitman reprinted the attack in *Leaves of Grass Imprints* to promote the 1860 edition of his book.

86 Ostrowski, 71.

87 Whitman and Spofford also shared celebrity around Washington at this time, and, on a number of occasions, corresponded regarding the editions of *Leaves of Grass* deposited at the Library of Congress. In a surprising and ultimately telling anecdote, Spofford even once published a complimentary editorial on Whitman under the "Sigma" appellation. In a column titled "Washington Gossip" in the *New York Evening Mail*, he observed the occasion of "Walt Whitman's return to town and to his desk in the Attorney General's Office," since the poet had become an integral part of the urban scene, "moving around in the open air," "[l]iving so largely out of doors," a "well-known … sight to all citizens." In lieu of the indecent poet, loose in morals and poetic form, here was Whitman as the large, expansive man of the city, sympathetic and indiscriminate as "any day he may be

noticed walking, observing, listening to, or socially talking with all sorts of people, policemen, drivers, market-men, blacks, or dignitaries; or, perhaps giving some small alms to beggars, the maimed or organ-grinders; or, stopping to caress little children, of whom he is very fond." Here was the representative poet required for Reconstruction; optimistic, welcoming, for the "older he gets, the more cheerful and gay-hearted he grows," and reform-minded, taking a "deep interest in all of the news, foreign and domestic." Thus, the capital, with its "wide space, great edifices, the breadth of our landscape, the ample vistas," was, "above all others, the one where Walt Whitman fitly belongs" ("Washington Gossip." *New York Evening Mail* 27 [October 1870], 1).

88 B. K. Pierce, "American Social Science Association," *Christian Advocate* 44 (1869), 345.

89 In fact, the history lesson offered in Spofford's speech was based on the reports of Justin Winsor, the Superintendent of the Boston Public Library. In that year, Winsor called for some "formally organized society of librarians" with the support of the American Social Science Association. In 1876, he helped found the American Library Association (Wayne Wiegand, *The Politics of an Emerging Profession: The American Library Association, 1876-1917* [Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986], 4).

90 Wiegand, 12.

91 Lora Dee Garrison, *Apostles of Culture: Public Librarians and American Society, 1876-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 42.

92 Garrison, 42.

93 Melvil Dewey, "The Profession," *Library Journal* 1 (June 30, 1877), 6.

94 Samuel Green, "Discussion," *Library Journal* 7 (1882), 201.

95 Wayne A. Wiegand, in Ostrowski, 71.

96 Ainsworth Rand Spofford, *A Book for All Readers Designed as an Aid to the Collection, Use, and Preservation of Books and the Formation of Public and Private Libraries* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1900), 19-20.

97 Reynolds, 483.

98 Spofford, "The Public Libraries of the United States: A Paper Read at the General Meeting of the Association, at New York, October 26, 1869," *Journal of Social Science, Containing the Proceedings of the American Association* 2 (1870), 92.

99 Spofford, "The Public Libraries," 99.

100 Yet for both, while all texts are politically or academically serviceable, not all literature was universally ethical or "good." When it came to literary taste, Spofford acknowledged the existence (and necessity) of a meritocratic canon: "the

books of every period tend continually to find their proper level …[;] [n]o permanent rank in the hierarchy of letters is ever settled by chance, any more than by excommunication" ("The Public Libraries," 112). Spofford's cautious hedging on the principle of inclusion had a practical component. Outside of Congress, most private and public libraries contained limited funds and insufficient shelves. Even though the democratic philosophy of librarianship proposed self-sufficiency, it made economic sense to articulate and publicize a discriminating list of the best books. According to Ostrowski, Spofford's "adverse judgments about the cultural value of popular literature" ended up in such manuals and reading guides published beyond his post at Congress (71).

101 Spofford, *A Book for All Readers*, 9-10.

102 Spofford, "Characteristics of Style," *PMLA* 7 (1892), 19-20.

103 Whitman, *Drum-Taps* (New York, 1865), 8. Available on the *Whitman Archive*.

104 Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (Washington, D.C., 1872), 118..

105 Fulton, 308.

106 John Burroughs, "Walt Whitman and his 'Drum Taps,'" *Galaxy* 2 (1866), 608.

107 Benedict, 237.

108 Fulton, 309.

REVIEWS

Matt Cohen. *Whitman's Drift: Imagining Literary Distribution*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2017. xviii + 269 pp.

Matt Cohen's *Whitman's Drift: Imagining Literary Distribution* is an innovative study of Walt Whitman's late career, one that shifts attention away from the poet himself to take up the question of how and where his poetry and his reputation circulated in the post-Civil War period. In chapters that are thematically and polemically linked but sharply different in their areas of focus, Cohen tracks the uptake of Whitman's poetry among working-class readers, the untimely circulation of his texts through unauthorized editions and translations, the extension of Whitman's reputation in areas of the country thought to be most impervious to his address—the South and Indian Country—and the new conditions of Whitman's transmission on the Internet. Meticulously researched and argued, Cohen's book is a significant contribution to Whitman studies, joining the work of scholars such as Martin T. Buinicki, M. Wynn Thomas, and Luke Mancuso in taking the late career seriously. Like these critics, Cohen shows how Whitman revised his poetic vision in the rapidly changing postwar environment, but his book is distinctive in moving beyond the saturating significance of the war to explore the poet's relationship to his growing reputation and the literary possibilities opened up by the consolidation of national markets.

The book's greatest impact, however, may turn out to be methodological. Book historians have long argued that literary critics need to look beyond the author to take into account the many intermediary figures who make literary culture possible—most obviously publishers, editors, reviewers, translators, booksellers, and librarians, but also those laborers involved in the production and circulation of literary works, including compositors, printers, book binders, wholesalers, cartmen, smugglers, and traveling salesmen. Literary critics have struggled to open up the vast middle ground of book distribution for analysis, gravitating instead to the

poles of production and reception—socialized versions of the author-reader dyad—where individual agency and cultural impact are more easily gauged. Cohen's choice to focus on distribution, then, is a bold one. His choice of "drift" as the animating concept for his study represents a radical attempt to rethink authorial agency under the sign of distribution—that is, to approach literary culture without minimizing or erasing the middle stages required for the transmission of texts, the reliance of literary reputations on numerous other hands, and the perplexing temporalities produced by the staggered, uneven, and recursive relays between and among them.

As Cohen points out, "drift" was a significant term for Whitman, who used it to evoke random motion, haphazard aggregation, and stubborn remainder in major poems such as "As I Ebb'd With the Ocean of Life" as well in the cluster of poems gathered under the title "Sea-Drift" in the 1881 edition. Cohen calls on the association of "drift" with waywardness to describe processes of textual circulation that are not under the control or the direct superintendence of authors. For instance, in his first chapter, which asks whether and how Whitman's poetic address to working-class readers reached laborers themselves, Cohen discusses a persistent disagreement between Whitman and his acolyte, Horace Traubel, who advocated a William Morris-inspired return to craft printing as a form of resistance to industrialized mass culture. But Whitman preferred cheap books that were widely available to expensive ones, even those that inscribed socialist values in their processes of production. Although studious of his image and a ceaseless marketer of his works, Whitman liked to give his books away and to imagine "the comparatively uncoordinated and unforced drift of his works through the literary marketplace" (45). "Drift" does a better job of capturing Whitman's complex desire to cede control over circulation than the subtitle's "distribution," which suggests apportionment and dispersal from a source or center. Drift's cognates in criticism and theory indicate the elusive territory Cohen stakes out in this book. The Situationists' "dérive" was a technique for engaging the built environment and questioning the ideologies that were sedimented there; drift, by contrast, suggests directionless movement across an

uncertain geography. Michael Moon's focus on "dissemination" in his landmark study *Disseminating Whitman* (1990) explored the relationship of Whitman's radical body politics to his constant revision of *Leaves of Grass*, charting the poet's changing ideas about embodiment across the sequence of editions. Cohen, by contrast, is less interested in what Whitman meant than in understanding what Whitman meant to others, invoking the sense of drift as "intention, roughly or weakly signaled" (12).

A key scene for Cohen in understanding how Whitman reached working class readers is Whitman's delivery of the occasional poem "After All, Not to Create Only" at the 1871 Industrial Exposition in New York City. Cohen notes that the poem circulated in multiple forms and formats—as performance, as a pamphlet, in newspaper reports, and in critiques and parodies—all before being repurposed for the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia and incorporated into *Leaves of Grass* as "Song of the Exposition" in 1881. Cohen describes how the poet transformed the poem in the process of revision, making it "abstractly occasional" (59) so that it would apply to any such gathering, but his attention is mostly drawn to Whitman's claims about the original scene of reception, his interest in a crowd of manual labors gathered at the edges of the hall. Though skeptical about Whitman's reverential assertion that there were "five or six hundred partially-hushed work-men, carpenters, machinists and the like" (60) who overheard the performance, Cohen argues that, like the newspaper reviews of the event, this too is an important "distribution scene" (61), one that charts the drift of Whitman's reputation whether or not these workers cared to listen or could even hear the poem over the ambient noise of the fair. These workers may never read a word of Whitman's poetry, but Cohen argues that the poet's very appearance onstage in workers' garb would have enabled those assembled there to catch his drift.

The textual and performance history of "After All Not to Create Only" captures a number of aspects of Whitman's late career that most interest Cohen: the peculiar combination of accident and purposiveness favored by the poet; the simultaneous circulation of multiple versions of his poetry, a history that has been eclipsed

by previous critics' emphasis on the monolith of *Leaves of Grass;* and the staggered temporality of circulation that characterizes Whitman's popular reputation, a phenomenon that cannot be captured by the linear progression of editions. A key exhibit in Cohen's attempt to liberate criticism from its reliance on the sequence of editions of *Leaves of Grass* is the reappearance in the early 1880s of an unauthorized reprint of the 1860 edition, printed by Richard Worthington from the stereotype plates that were sold off in the bankruptcy of publisher Thayer and Eldridge. Cohen is fascinated by the way in which this book escapes the attention of both bibliographers and critics. It doesn't involve a resetting of type so, strictly speaking, it's not an edition, and Whitman's acceptance of a lump-sum payment from Worthington places the work in a gray area between piracy and legitimate publishing (Whitman delightfully calls the books "languid surreptitious copies" [85], transposing onto the books themselves qualities that fail to convey only censure). Cohen argues that the reappearance of an affordably priced 1860 edition may have spurred the sales of the authorized 1881 edition, helping to spread Whitman's reputation just as a new and improved edition was hot off the press. But the circulation in the 1880s of the 1860 edition poses a challenge to criticism that can't be solved simply by tinkering with timelines. In an interpretive experiment that recalls Jorge Luis Borges' hilarious burlesque of literary criticism "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*," Cohen explores what it may have meant to have encountered Whitman's exuberant antebellum nationalism in the context of Reconstruction-era conflict, particularly given the absence of an accounting of the war in the 1860 *Leaves of Grass*. In "Pierre Menard," Borges offers parallel readings of identical lines from *Don Quixote*, first under the assumption that the text was written in the early seventeenth century, then as it was recomposed, or "arrived at" by his fictional modernist aesthete. Borges notes wryly that "the contrast in style is . . . vivid": "The archaic style of Menard—quite foreign, after all—suffers from a certain affectation. Not so that of his forerunner, who handles with ease the current Spanish of his time" (see *Labyrinths: Selected Stories & Other Writings*, ed. Donald A. Yates and James East Irby [1964], 43). Cohen's rereading of the 1860 edition as an 1880s text

similarly emphasizes how even formalist literary criticism is supported by assumptions about history, assumptions that are undermined by the disorderly circulation of Whitman's texts, the presence at any one time of multiple, competing versions of *Leaves of Grass.*

Cohen's book concludes with an account of the dissemination of Whitman's texts on *The Walt Whitman Archive* (whitmanarchive.org), for which he has edited the digital edition of Horace Traubel's *With Walt Whitman in Camden* as well as a vast collection of Whitman's own marginalia and annotations. While this chapter seeks to extend the concept of distribution-as-drift to the present day, the recoverable, mappable traces of global internet access, and the simultaneity suggested by the internet's timeless, constant availability seem sharply different from the uneven circulation of Whitman's poetry in books, pamphlets, and newspapers across a rapidly changing geographical terrain. Where the internet seems to make the most difference to a literary history of circulation is in critics' newfound access to digitized newspapers, which permit the tracking of an author's reputation at a local level and invite us to venture beyond the precincts of the book, whether we search and read these papers digitally or in print. Some of Cohen's most remarkable discoveries and haunting readings stem from his tracking of Whitman's post-war reputation in local contexts—in the *Long Islander*, the newspaper Whitman founded in 1838, and in the *Guntersville Democrat*, the home-town newspaper of an ardent Alabama devotee of Whitman's work, a formerly slave-owning, ex-Confederate soldier who recited Whitman's poetry at county fairs and named one of his ten children after the poet. Cohen's exploration of the extension of Whitman's reputation in the South and in Indian Country is a tour de force of argument; it also showcases his innovative combination of digital and conventional research. While one suspects that Cohen's editorial close reading of Traubel's remarkable, 9-volume record of Whitman's meandering daily conversations is the source of many of the discoveries that animate *Whitman's Drift*, Cohen consults a remarkable range of resources in pursuit of the outer edges of the circulation of the poet's work and reputation: Whitman's daybooks and correspon-

dence, trade journals, Supreme Court cases, local newspapers and their exchange lists, historical maps, and contemporary historical markers. Cohen's account of who was reading Whitman, how they understood him, and how Whitman himself grappled with evidence of the uncontrolled circulation of his work will surprise even seasoned Whitman scholars. His archival ingenuity ought to give a new generation of critics the tools to think and write about the relatively uncharted space between author and reader, production and reception.

Rutgers University MEREDITH L. MCGILL

Lindsay Tuggle. *The Afterlives of Specimens: Science, Mourning, and Whitman's Civil War*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2017. xiv + 254 pp.

There are a host of scholars whose monographs have considered either Whitman's literary relationship to medical science or to grief and mourning practices with an especial focus on the Civil War. One thinks, perhaps, of M. Wynn Thomas's *The Lunar Light of Whitman's Poetry* (1987), Greg Eiselein's *Literature and Humanitarian Reform in the Civil War Era* (1996), Robert Leigh Davis's *Whitman and the Romance of Medicine* (1997), Harold Aspiz's *So Long! Walt Whitman's Poetry of Death* (2004), Mitchell Breitweiser's *National Melancholy: Mourning and Opportunity in Classic American Literature* (2007), Max Cavitch's *American Elegy: The Poetry of Mourning from the Puritans to Whitman* (2007), and Adam Bradford's *Communities of Death: Whitman, Poe, and the American Culture of Mourning* (2014). None of these, however, has sought to bring together the ways that Whitman's mourning of the lost soldiers of the Civil War is navigated through discourses both poetic *and* medical to anywhere near the degree that Lindsay Tuggle does in *The Afterlives of Specimens*. She has sought to triangulate Whitman's experience of and response to the war

through, in her words, "intersecting scientific and mourning communities" that were largely fixated on "the human cadaver and its abandoned parts" (14).

Tuggle makes good on her promise to show how deeply imbricated Whitman's response to war and loss was with respect to the scientific ideas and medical practices of the time. Her most powerful contributions emerge as she connects Whitman's work to that of John H. Brinton, the curator of the period's Army Medical Museum, and Silas Weir Mitchell, medical luminary and the first to diagnose phantom limb syndrome. In teasing out the curious parallels between the war-time experiences of Whitman and Brinton, Tuggle shows how both men were deeply attuned to the need to preserve something of those "specimens," the many brave and beloved soldiers that they encountered in the hospitals—and, through a comparative examination of their practice, she illuminates the archives, literary or otherwise, created by each. Moreover, in reading Whitman's prose and poetry in light of the emergent medical science associated with phantom-limb syndrome, Tuggle accretes new and powerful layers of interpretive signification onto the many "phantoms" that haunt Whitman's Civil War work. What emerges, as a result, is a compelling narrative that offers new insight into how Whitman's personal experience of loss during and after the Civil War was mediated through contemporary scientific thought, emergent medical practices, and literary inscription.

Tuggle begins her work with an analysis of the prevalent sentimental and emerging scientific views of the body that were generally in conflict with one another during the period. Through an examination of the practices of "resurrectionists"–medically motivated body snatchers seeking corpses for anatomical study–she analyzes the nature of the conflict that existed between them and the vast majority of the populace who saw the deceased body as a sacrosanct trace of the dead that merited veneration, not dissection. Whitman, ever a believer in the divinity of the body, was vehemently opposed to body snatching, as Tuggle points out, but nevertheless "recognized the medical advancement that

anatomy promised…[and was thus] able to divorce resurrectionism from the science underpinning the market for stolen bodies" (37). At the heart of the resurrectionist's practice was a perception of the human body as a "specimen," an idea that, she argues, Whitman not only imports into his poetry from such a practice, but fuses with his own ideas regarding the divinity of the body: "cadavers were incorporated as raw material by nineteenth-century anatomists, [but] Whitman incorporated 'outcast' bodies towards very different ends. The specimen is not a dehumanizing tool for Whitman, but a model of collective identity. Anatomical symmetry reveals our shared humanity" (39). In short, Tuggle argues that Whitman's perseveration on and veneration of the body in poems such as "Song of Myself" and "I Sing the Body Electric" represents the amalgamation of the perspectives of the nineteenth-century anatomist and sentimentalist—an amalgamation that, when wedded with Whitman's sense of egalitarianism, leaves him aspiring "to become a 'resurrectionist' in another, more democratic sense, absorbing and reviving the dead" in his work in a way not entirely dissimilar from the "grass" that he fetishizes so frequently in his poetry. Because Whitman fantasizes an ongoing connection with the dead, Tuggle also rightly reads his desire to connect with the dead as an act of melancholia—an unresolvable longing to recover an otherwise lost but desired object. As "both human remnant and anatomical object," she argues, "the Whitmanian specimen [in successive editions of *Leaves of Grass*] emerges as a melancholically erotic relic that preserves enduring attachments" to those "'he might have loved'" had he known them. The unknown dead that permeate the various passages of *Leaves of Grass* thus appear to owe their anonymity to Whitman's appropriation of the resurrectionist's proclivity for viewing the human body as anatomical specimen, albeit a specimen whose erotic potential is kept alive and made poetically powerful as a result of Whitman's desire.

If medical science and the psychological phenomenon of mourning inform the representation of the dead in *Leaves of Grass*, they are even more central to Whitman's response to the

Civil War—a war that forced, in Tuggle's words, a "shrinking distinction between the human body as an object of mourning and a subject of scientific inquiry" (62-63). She charts this "shrinking distinction" in her second chapter through an examination of Whitman's *Memoranda During the War* and John H. Brinton's *Personal Memoirs of John H. Brinton, Civil War Surgeon, 1861-1865*. Brinton and Whitman sought to address the same questions, she argues, namely, what is the significance of all of this detritus of war—the broken bodies and countless dead—and what is one to do with it? For both Whitman and Brinton, Tuggle suggests, the answer was to be found in the creation of archives, literary or literal, that could incorporate that which the war threatened to elide. For Brinton the collection of specimens in Civil War hospitals was tied to the need to advance medical science—which he did by gleaning the amputated limbs and other human detritus that he and other surgeons like him produced while operating, and by locating that detritus in the Army Medical Museum where it could be studied to advance medical science. Curiously, the compulsion to collect and retain these otherwise macabre specimens also answered a cultural if not psychological need for the individuals who visited the museum—giving them a space in which to revisit, reclaim, or bear witness to the losses of war.

While Tuggle's analysis of Brinton's practice is of significant interest and value in its own right, even greater payoffs come when she turns to Whitman's textual "collection" of specimen soldiers in *Memoranda During the War*, which gets the lion's share of her attention in this chapter. Like Brinton, Whitman sought a way to collect and preserve the specimens he found in the Civil War hospitals, but this collection ultimately serves not the interests of science or a traumatized public so much as those of the traumatized poet himself. In her estimation, Whitman's war work archives a collection that was deeply personal and was called into being by the psychic trauma that Whitman experienced as he witnessed and lamented the decline of so many bodies from vibrancy into death. For Tuggle, the "psychosomatic aftermaths of trauma" generated by his experiences in the hospitals drove the

production of *Memoranda During the War* and its attempts to "salvage the war's 'human fragments'" and "textually preserve … [those] broken bodies" that Whitman loved and desired (63). Moreover, because psychosomatic trauma by nature persists, such a diagnosis, Tuggle explains, is why Whitman's war poetry and prose was repeatedly "clustered, altered, or expelled" as *Memoranda During the War* transmuted into *Specimen Days & Collect*, and *Drum-Taps* was folded into *Leaves of Grass*: "Each incarnation of the war text is an act of incorporative mourning. The bloodstained original is absorbed into the latest work, slightly altered with each retelling . . . [and mirroring] the elusive magnetism of trauma" as it is perpetually replayed in new forms in the psyche of the afflicted. Her reading thus offers us a view of Whitman locked in a perpetual struggle to navigate the losses and traumas of the war, with the telling and retelling of these becoming a symptomatic expression of his melancholic inability to reconcile himself to them. It is a compelling vision of Whitman's postbellum corpus, powerfully unsettling in its invitation to dwell in what Tuggle paints as unresolved—and seemingly unresolvable—grief.

The perpetually open psychological wound that Tuggle sees urging the various iterations of Whitman's work is further illuminated by recurring to the experiences of the many amputees of the war, which is the subject of Chapter 3. Soldiers' experiences of phantom-limb syndrome, as described by Silas Weir Mitchell, left them in a similar state where loss is perpetually experienced by virtue of the psychosomatic perception of that which is no longer there. As Tuggle describes it, "the phantom limb manifests as a physical presence felt most acutely in its absence," a phenomenon which she asserts has its parallel in Whitman's "melancholic drive to textually preserve specimens" (116). His desire for lost bodies, his "sustain[ed] attraction to the lost other," can be best understood in the resonance that exists between this desire and the experience of those soldiers who themselves underwent amputation. The parallels between a soldier's psychosomatic experience of a phantom limb and Whitman's melancholic inscription of phantoms throughout his Civil War work thus casts

both amputee and Whitman in a similar light—with Whitman's own wounds made visible in the phantoms that populate his work as "physical presence[s] felt most acutely in [their] absence," not wholly unlike the soldiers whose limbs were experienced as perpetually present through their constant absence. Whitman, Tuggle thus demonstrates, did not escape the hospitals any less maimed than many of the soldiers he loved.

Whitman's phantoms, appearing and reappearing throughout his postbellum archive, stand as testament to the enduring psychological wounds of war-time trauma—and, Tuggle argues in her fourth chapter, contributing to this repetition compulsion was Whitman's flagging faith in the earth's ability to perform a recuperative function of preserving and recycling the dead. Aware of corpses strewn across and sewn more or less deeply into the landscape, unearthed by everything from rain to rooting hogs, Whitman in his postwar editions of *Leaves of Grass* demonstrates, in Tuggle's view, an inability "to find lasting resolution to his anxiety for the unknown and unburied." Nowhere in her reading of Whitman's work is this more apparent than in her treatment of Whitman's magisterial elegy for Lincoln, "When Lilacs Last in the Door Yard Bloom'd." For her, the lilacs broken and made to festoon a coffin that will be entombed instead of interred suggest that neither flowers nor man appear poised to leaven a landscape already suffused with a superabundance of the dead. In this refusal to locate Lincoln within the earth, she argues, stands Whitman's penultimate acknowledge ment that the war has exceeded the earth's "ecoerotic" ability to effectively house, preserve, and recycle the dead—further necessitating their surrogate incorporation into Whitman's postbellum texts themselves.

Whitman's skepticism regarding the earth's incorporative faculties is at least partially the focus of her final chapter, as well. Here, Tuggle suggests that it is Whitman's crisis of faith in the earth's recuperative abilities that become the impetus for his refusal to make good on his promise in *Leaves of Grass* to "bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love." Rath-

er than undergo burial, Whitman, in a mystery that invites (and has invited much) commentary, built a rather imposing tomb for his remains. In an elegant bookend, Tuggle concludes her examination not only by offering up her explanation of Whitman's choice to be entombed, but also by analyzing how Whitman's body was subjected to the "anatomist's" knife—chronicling the event of his autopsy through the eyes and experience of Horace Traubel who attended it, and suggesting how that autopsy and the attendant parts of Whitman's corpse that it extracted and (unsuccessfully) preserved became the object of the medical practitioner and scientist's gaze. Macabre as such a scene may appear, in the light of Tuggle's narrative it ultimately seems rather fitting that Whitman's corpse should be as deeply marked as his literary corpus by medical science.

Because much of Tuggle's focus, and a good deal of Whitman's firsthand experience with medical science, centers on the Civil War period, it is fitting that Tuggle's most robust contributions are made when examining Whitman's experience, literary and otherwise, during this traumatic time. Previous scholars have recognized Whitman's proclivity for collecting "specimens" in his work, but Tuggle adds significantly to our understanding of this phenomenon when she identifies the resonances between Whitman's literary practice and that of Brinton in his creation of the American Medical Museum—both of which offer testimony to the anxieties and opportunities attending the trauma of war.

Additionally, while Tuggle is not the first to note a connection between Whitman's and Mitchell's understanding of the body, her amplification of the resonances that exist between Whitman's literary representation of phantom soldiers and Mitchell's documentation of phantom-limb syndrome adds a rich and unexpected interpretive register to the ghosts haunting Whitman's postbellum literary landscape. Triangulating these rewarding scholarly narratives through the lens of psychoanalytic theory seems, on its surface, to be appropriate, given the emphasis on mourning. However, despite Tuggle's efforts to

suggest that Whitman's melancholic and literary attachments to the dead are non-pathological, her reliance on a body of theory that is generally invested in the idea that melancholia is a subspecies of neurosis ultimately paints Whitman in a similar light. Consequently, his work appears here as the neurotic manifestation of an inability to recuperate from the trauma of war. To some degree, this may very well be the case, but, if so, one wonders how best to account for Whitman's more optimistic works—such as "Passage to India," "To Think of Time," "O Living Always – Always Dying!"—which were often clustered or annexed in combination with the darker Civil War poems but which seem to envision death as progressive and recuperative instead of a source of trauma and loss. On such poems, Tuggle is largely silent, and some commentary would have been most welcome. Such omissions notwithstanding, her work compellingly unearths the deep connections between Whitman's poetry, medical ideas and practice, and the experience of war. *The Afterlives of Specimens* is a significant scholarly contribution that will be of interest to Whitman scholars, medical humanists, Civil War historians, and scholars of nineteenth-century America more generally.

Florida Atlantic University ADAM BRADFORD

WALT WHITMAN: A CURRENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Acamovic, Bojana L. "Look for Him under Your Bootsoles . . . or in His Prose." *NASLEDE* 14 no. 36 (2017), 69-79. [Compares *Specimen Days* to Whitman's poetry and discovers many similar "stylistic features"—the "prose-like features in Whitman's poetry" are balanced by "poetic practices at work in his prose pieces"; goes on to examine the prose in relation to the poetry and finds "Whitman's prose writings are complementary to his poetry and can serve as a key for interpreting it."]

Barron, James. "Seeking a Second Chance at Landmark Status, Aluminum Siding and All." *New York Times* (July 15, 2018). [Reports on efforts by various Whitman advocates to get "landmark stats" for his former house on Ryerson Street in Brooklyn, even though it has undergone significant alterations (including aluminum siding) since the time Whitman lived there; quotes various Whitman experts on the importance of the house.]

Blake, Leo D., and Matthew L. Ifill. "Then the Camden Ferry." *Conversations* (Winter 2017-18), 1-5. [Recounts Whitman's love of ferries in both Brooklyn and Camden, and describes the history of a 1940 painting of "Whitman on the Camden Ferryboat Wenonah" by Hannah Cutler Groves (1868-1952), who met Whitman on a ferry when she was a young girl in the 1870s; the painting is now owned by the Walt Whitman Association in Camden and is being restored.]

Boorse, Michael J., ed. *Conversations* (Winter 2017-18). [Newsletter of the Walt Whitman Association, Camden, NJ; this issue contains reports of Association events, including news of the erection of a new historical marker in Camden to honor Whitman, winning entries in the annual High School Poetry Contest, a report on the celebration at the Camden Mickle Street house on Whitman's 198th birthday, and one article, listed separately in this bibliography.]

Brooks, David. "What Holds America Together." *New York Times* (March 19, 2018). [Asks "What on earth holds this nation together?," and turns to Whitman's *Democratic Vistas* for the answer, viewing it as a "lab report" on "the American experiment to draw people from around the world and to create the best society ever"; concludes that "so much of what he wrote rings true today: the need to see democratic life as an exhilarating adventure, the

terrible damage done when you tell groups that they are of no account, the need for a unifying American mythos, the power of culture to provide that mythos, and above all, the reminder that this is still early days. We're still a young country."]

Camboni, Marina. "Giovanni Papini e Walt Whitman tra Pragmatismo, Nietzsche e Futurismo" ["Giovanni Papini and Walt Whitman: Between Pragmatism, Nietzsche and Futurism."] *Novecento Transnazionale: Letterature, arti e culture* 2, no.1 (2018), 26-41. [Examines Italian author Giovanni Papini's (1881-1956) encounter with William James's Pragmatism and "argues that Papini's early reading of the two volumes of Walt Whitman's *Canti scelti* shaped his own brand of pragmatism"; analyzes Papini's influential 1908 essay, "Walt Whitman," which "pragmatically used Whitman's poetry to show Italian artists how to write modern literature," "created an image of the poet/Whitman as a hybrid, avant-gardist and pragmatist, Übermensch," and brought Whitman into "the cultural debate of the time" over Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (a debate that involved a wide variety of figures like feminist author Sibilla Aleramo (1876-1960], syndicalist politician Benito Mussolini [1883-1945], and futurist artist F. T. Marinetti [1876-1944]); concludes by investigating "the image of the 'newborn' modern man and its machinistic Futurist incarnation, to show how its spiritualist version in Papini's work and its dynamically futurist image project in-human and anti-human visions of a future humanity, totally different from that of full-bodied, sentient and democratic human beings imagined by Whitman"; in Italian.]

Dworkin, Dennis. Review of Kirsten Harris, *Walt Whitman and British Socialism*. *Victorian Studies* 60 (Fall 2017), 117-119.

Ferrere, Alexandre. "Walt Whitman and Allen Ginsberg: A Story of Influences." *Empty Mirror* (2018), emptymirrorbooks.com. [Examines the long history of Allen Ginsberg's reading of, responses to, and uses of Whitman.]

Folsom, Ed. "In Memoriam: Donald J. Kummings, 1940-2017." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 35 (Winter/Spring 2018), 301. [Memorial tribute to Whitman scholar Donald Kummings.]

Folsom, Ed. "Walt Whitman: A Current Bibliography." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 35 (Winter/Spring 2018), 287-298.

Fomeshi, Behnam Mirzababazadeh. "'Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere': Parvin E'tesami's Creative Reception of Walt Whitman." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 35 (Winter/Spring 2018), 267-275. [Demonstrates how Iranian poet Parvin E'tesami's (1907-1941) poem "God's Weaver" (1941) melds "classical Persian poetry, the fables of Aesop and La Fontaine, [and] her father's translations from Western literatures" with the work of Whitman, specifically his "A Noiseless Patient Spider," a poem E'tesami likely encountered at the American school for girls she attended in Tehran; offers a detailed reading of the poem that emphasizes how Parvin "create[d] her own unique spider . . . a cross-bred spider that is part Persian and part Whitmanian."]

Gaillard, Hélène. "Singing and Painting the Body: Walt Whitman and Thomas Eakins' Approach to Corporeality." *Miranda* 15 (2017), journals.openedition.org/Miranda/10470. [Focuses on "the similarities in Whitman and Eakins' treatment of the flesh and their mutual efforts to promote a new understanding of corporeality," offering a "comprehensive study of the social resonance of corporeal matters in Eakins and Whitman's art," including "the link between medical progress and the two artists' aesthetics."]

Geberer, Raanan. "Brooklyn Pols Support Landmarking Walt Whitman's Home." *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (May 23, 2018), brooklyneagle.com. [Reports on the efforts of "a coalition of preservationists, scholars and admirers of poet and former Brooklyn Eagle editor Walt Whitman to landmark one of his former homes at 99 Ryerson St." in Brooklyn, an effort that now has the support of seven city councilmembers.]

Heine, Stefanie. "Circulating Multitudes: From Antiquity to Cell Theory." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 35 (Winter/Spring 2018), 219-244. [Examines "some intertexts and possible sources" for "the tension between singularity and multiplicity in the organic poetics sketched in *Leaves of Grass*," offering "a new context" for Whitman's "conceptions of the body and organic life" by tracing them "back to antiquity, in particular to Pre-Socratic and Stoic philosophy," and tracing them also to Whitman's reading about "some of the latest discoveries in biology" in the mid-nineteenth century, particularly "cell theory"; takes a "comparative look" at how "Pre-Socratic and Stoic philosophy and cell theory approach the 'contradiction' addressed in 'Song of Myself,'" discovering "more similarities between the two discourses than one would expect"; probes the nature of "breath" in "Song of Myself" and analyzes the scientific works on cells and breathing by, among

others, Joseph Priestly, Theodor Schwann, and Matthias Jakob Schleiden.]

Hennequet, Claire. *Nation, démocratie et poésie en Amérique: L'Identité poétique de la nation chez Walt Whitman, José Martí et Aimé Césaire* [*Nation, Democracy and Poetry in America: The Poetic Identity of the Nation by Walt Whitman, José Martí et Aimé Césaire*]. Paris, France: Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2017. [Investigates Whitman in relation to Cuban poet José Martí (1853-1895) and Martinique poet Aimé Césaire (1913-2008), examining all three as national poets who represent in their work the new territories, emerging peoples, and complex histories (including slavery) of their countries, and who all provide radically upsetting styles that open possibilities for new definitions of nation and citizenry; in French.]

Karbiener, Karen. "In Memoriam: Joann Peck Krieg, 1932-2017." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 35 (Winter/Spring 2018), 299-300. [Memorial tribute to Whitman scholar Joann Krieg.]

Latini, Ryan. "Walt Whitman's Grave Concern." *Medium* (May 23, 2017), medium.com. [Reports on a trip to Whitman's grave in Camden, New Jersey, and on the author's research about the history of Whitman's planning for his tomb.]

Marchant, Fred. "Walt Whitman's House." *Radical Teacher* no. 111 (July 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."]

Meiners, Benjamin. "Whitman's Narrative Futurism: Frontier Erotics in the 1860 *Leaves of Grass*." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 35 (Winter/Spring 2018), 245-266. [Argues that "the intimate entanglement between Whitman's 'radical' and 'democratic' sexual poetics and his nationalist, imperialist vision of United States expansion has remained overlooked" in Whitman criticism; sets out to trace "the frontier erotics of one of Whitman's earliest efforts to describe the possibilities of queer futurity in the 1860 edition of Leaves of Grass"; and probes "how Whitman's radical sexual vision of democracy in many ways depended upon violence—obscured at times as it may be—against indigenous peoples in the U.S."]

Michael, John. *Secular Lyric: The Modernization of the Poem in Poe, Whitman, and Dickinson*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2018. ["Part II: Walt Whitman" consists of two chapters: Chapter 3, "Whitman's Poetics and Death: The Poet, Metonymy, and the Crowd" (91-124), examines how

"Whitman's poetic language experiment in his early editions of *Leaves of Grass* modernizes and secularizes [the] long tradition of poetic self-expression and brings the lyric face to face with—or, more precisely, makes the lyric 'I' internalize—the heterogeneities of the modern crowd as an object the poet might imagine himself possessed by and possessing," and how "death and materialism, first and last imbuing in his poetry, comes to center Whitman's modern assumption of the lyric tradition and the modern crowd that had come to define poetry's context"; and Chapter 4, "Whitman and Democracy: The 'Withness of the World' and the Fakes of Death" (125-156), explores "the palpability of death and democracy in Whitman's poems," concluding that "Whitman's genius was not only to invent a poetic form to order and disorient the world, but also to realize that the ethical and political survival of a democratic nation in a secular age may depend upon the ability to imagine the fakes of union where union has no substantial meaning beyond the vagaries and instabilities of a pressing and renewable urge for contact."]

O'Neil, Brandon J. "Meditations on the Birth of Self: Archetypal Revelations in Whitman's 1855 'Song of Myself.'" *Quadrant* 47 (Spring 2017), 23-41. [Examines how the 1855 poem eventually called "Song of Myself" "foreshadows the later psychological theories of C. G. Jung," especially Jung's theories of "Individuation"; reads Whitman's "extensive uses of prenatal and childhood imagery" through the lens of Jung, Marie-Louise von Franz, Erich Neumann, and other Jungians; and concludes that "Whitman's celebration of himself releases masculine and feminine expressions from their traditional bounds, invites soul and body into playful procreation, and redefines the cycles of life and death, allowing the reader an intimate glimpse into this process of *being*."]

Plotica, Luke Philip. "Singing Oneself or Living Deliberately: Whitman and Thoreau on Individuality and Democracy." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 53 (Fall 2017), 601-621. [Investigates how both Whitman and Henry David Thoreau "valorized individuality" yet presented "competing ideals" of the self: "Whitman's was expansive and centrifugal while Thoreau's was integral and centripetal," with Whitman's "porous, malleable, internally plural self" standing in contrast to Thoreau's "bounded, willful self"; analyzes how their "distinct visions of individuality continue to speak to us today" and "inform analysis of and attachment to modern democratic institutions and practices."]

Price, Marsha M. "Faded Blackness: Racial Ideologies of Whitman, Alcott, and Cather Reflecting the Antebellulm and Postbellum Periods." M.A. Thesis, Morgan State University, 2018. [Chapter 3, "Whitman's Marginalization of the African American in *Leaves of Grass*," examines "Ethiopia Saluting the Colors," "I Hear America Singing," "I Sing the Body Electric," "Song of the Redwood Tree," and other poems; MAI 58/01M(E)].

Riordan, Kevin. "For Walt Whitman's Old Camden Neighborhood, a Bit of Poetic Justice." *The Inquirer* [Philadelphia, PA] (July 20, 2018). [Reports that the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has awarded nearly $900,000 "for design work" leading to "restoration of the houses on either side of the poet's residence" on Mickle Street in Camden; reviews how the poet ended up in Camden and summarizes his thoughts about the city.]

Robertson, Michael. "'New-born Bard[s] of the Holy Ghost': The American Bibles of Walt Whitman and Joseph Smith." In Harold K. Bush and Brian Yothers, eds., *Above the American Renaissance: David S. Reynolds and the Spiritual Imagination in American Literary Studies* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2018), 140-160. [Examines *Leaves of Grass* and the *Book of Mormon* "side by side" in order to "not only shed light on Whitman's scriptural ambitions and the religious dimensions of *Leaves of Grass* but also contribute to recent efforts to bring the *Book of Mormon* into American literary studies"; does not claim that "Whitman was directly influenced by [Joseph] Smith" (even while suggesting that they "were brothers under the skin"), but rather locates both books "in what Richard Brodhead has called 'the history of prophetism in their time,'" since both "Smith and Whitman . . . eagerly assumed the role of prophet," though "both wore the prophetic mantle uneasily, for their claims to a unique gift were at odds with their democratic impulses"; finds that both books "offer themselves not only as instruments of re-enchantment but as foundational texts for a revivified American nation," and concludes by arguing that "if the Book of Mormon invites belief, Walt Whitman's new American bible demands action."]

Saville, Julia F. *Victorian Soul-Talk: Poetry, Democracy, and the Body Politic*. London: Palgrave Macmillan (Palgrave Studies in Nineteenth-Century Writing and Culture), 2017. [Chapter 5, "'The Hum of Your Valvèd Voice': Walt Whitman's Soul and His Democratic Soul Politic" (171-219), explores how Whitman's "talk of soul resonates suggestively with that of his British contemporaries," especially Elizabeth Barrett Browning (soul's reticence),

Arthur Hugh Clough ("soul's need for the freedom associated with leisure and the open air"), and Robert Browning (idealized "sighs of the soul"); these "echoes alone make Whitman a tempting candidate for a place in an exploration of soul-talk as a dimension of transnational civic virtue," but, more importantly, "his approach to socioeconomic class and the secularism of his soul" makes him "an especially interesting interlocutor for British soul poets"; goes on to "explore the provenance of Whitman's secularized soul and the class politics underpinning it" and the ways "he contributes new energy to the idea of leisure as a civil right"; analyzes how Whitman, "as a supporter of abolition and of states' rights, brings unexpected insights to bear on the fugitive slave and abolition debates with which [Elizabeth Barrett Browning] engages," and concludes by considering how "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" served as "an antidote to postwar cynicism and bitterness" and became "a lasting inspiration to the aspiring republican poet Swinburne."]

Schöberlein, Stefan. "'From many million heart-throbs': Walt Whitman's Communitarian Sentimentalisms." *College Literature* 45 (Summer 2018), 449-486. [Offers "a re-reading of sentimental affect in Whitman's oeuvre as a conscious, poetic and political strategy that goes beyond traditional misreadings of this literary mode as wooden, trite, or uncreative" in order to "lay out how and to what end [Whitman] engaged with the sentimental, what this mode of writing brought to *Leaves of Grass*, and how the poet re-configured and expanded it throughout his life as a writer," arguing that "there is not 'one sentimentalism' in Whitman but a multitude of varying affective-poetical responses to the changing societal and political climate the poet is engaged with"; seeks to "open up his oeuvre to larger discussions of sentimentalism in the nineteenth century" and demonstrate how "the sentimental was a crucial component of his egalitarian vision of society: embraced for creating a sense of 'comradeship' and belonging but rejected for its tendencies to homogenize and exclude"; and traces "the attempts in Leaves at writing communities into being through the sentimental" by tracking "the sentimental impetus" through "the major editions of *Leaves of Grass*," as the poet moves from "the reformist politics of conservative sentimentalism in the 1840s and early 1850s" to "his hope for the sentimental to preempt and, later, mend the horrors of war, and finally settle on a familial sentimentalism that, while at times reactionary, also relishes in a radical belief in futurity."]

Schöberlein, Stefan. "Johannes R. Becher's 'To Europa': A German Expressionist Takes Up Walt Whitman's Broad-Axe." *Chicago Review* 61 no. 2 (2018), 117-129. [Examines the conflicted career of German poet Johannes R. Becher (1891-1958), and particularly his early expressionist work, which "carried with it a distinctly American touch: it was Whitmanian"; this Whitmanian influence is particularly evident in "his expressionist poem-manifesto 'To Europa' (1916)—a wild 348-line call to arms that transposes moments from a number of pieces by Walt Whitman into an apocalypse of war and revolution," drawing upon Whitman's "Europe, the 72d and 73d years of These States," "The Mystic Trumpeter," "Pioneers! O Pioneers!," and especially "Song of the Broad-Axe," in order to create "a blood-drenched call for radical European renewal"; offers a close reading of (and translations of major parts of) "To Europa," and investigates just what it is that Becher found in Whitman that led him to use to the American poet to construct such a statement of "socialist realism" that would lead to Becher's German Democratic Republic (GDR); the author's full translation of Becher's "To Europa" is available on the *Chicago Review* website: http://chicagoreview.org/johannes-r-bechers-to-europa/.]

Stephenson, Shelby. *Paul's Hill: Homage to Whitman*. Durham, NC: Sir Walter Press, 2018. [52-part poem, echoing "Song of Myself" in structure and style; illustrated by Jake Stephenson.]

Udayakumar, Ganesh Kumar Radha. "O Leader: Stalin's Poem for Karunanidhi Reminds You of 1865 Elegy for Lincoln." *India Today* (August 9, 2018), indiatoday.in. [Compares MK Stalin's 2018 poem, "Shall I Call You Father, My Leader?"—written in Tamil on the death of his father, Indian writer and politician Muthuvel Karunanidhi (1924-2018)—to Whitman's "O Captain! My Captain!"; finds Stalin's poem to be written "in a tone reminiscent" of Whitman's poem about Abraham Lincoln, sharing "the common tone of desolation and grief."]

Whitman, Walt. *Listy Trávy* [*Leaves of Grass]*. Translated by Ondrej Skovajsa and Hana Lundiaková. Prague: Malvern, 2017. [First complete Czech translation of the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, with a note on the 1855 edition (159-162) by the translators; in Czech.]

Whitman, Walt. "Wylst ik mei myn holle yn dyn skurte lis kammeraar" ["As I Lay with My Head in Your Lap Camerado"]. *Ensafh* 1 (April 2018), 60-61. [Translation by LubbertJan de Vries, in Frisian, of "As I Lay with My Head in Your Lap Camerado"; original English version on p. 60, with Frisian translation on p. 61.]

The University of Iowa ED FOLSOM

"Walt Whitman: A Current Bibliography," now covering work on Whitman from 1838 to the present, is available in a fully searchable format online at the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* website (ir.uiowa.edu/wwqr/) and at the *Walt Whitman Archive* (whitmanarchive.org).

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS OF STYLE

Essays: Place the author's name two inches below the title and the institutional affiliation at the end of the essay. (Note: this information will be excised for peer review by the editor.)

Notes, Book Reviews, Bibliographies: These are configured like essays, except the author's name follows the work.

References: Follow *The MLA Style Sheet*, Second Edition. Mark references in the text with raised footnote numbers, not author-year citations in parentheses. Double-spaced endnotes should follow the essay on a new page headed "Notes." Do not use Latin abbreviations for repeated citations. Do not condense the names of publishers or titles. Make references complete so that a bibliography is unnecessary. When citing journal articles, give the volume number of the journal followed by the issue date in parentheses, followed by a comma, followed by the page number(s)—e.g., Joann P. Krieg, "Whitman and Modern Dance," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 24 (Spring 2007), 208-209.

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.

After the initial citation, contributors should abbreviate the titles of the *Collected Writings* in the endnotes as follows:

EPF — *The Early Poems and Fiction*, edited by Thomas L. Brasher (1963)

PW — *Prose Works 1892*, edited by Floyd Stovall. Vol. 1: *Specimen Days* (1963); Vol. 2: *Collect and Other Prose* (1964).
with a Composite Index (1977); Vol. 7, edited by Ted Genoways (2004).

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).

PROCEDURES FOR SUBMITTING WORK

To submit original work, please visit the *WWQR* website at: http://ir.uiowa.edu/wwqr.

Address all correspondence to Editor, *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*, The University of Iowa, 308 English Philosophy Bldg., Iowa City, IA, 52242-1492.

Our email address is wwqr@uiowa.edu.

ORDERING BACK ISSUES

Almost all print issues before volume 33 are available for purchase. Single issues are $10.00 and double issues are $15.00 (including shipping charges). When ordering please specify the volume number, issue number, and year of publication for each issue you would like to purchase. Make checks payable to *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* and mail your order to: *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*, Department of English, The University of Iowa, 308 English-Philosophy Bldg., Iowa City, IA, 52242-1492.

The following issues are not available for purchase: 4:2/3 (Fall/Winter 1986/1987); 5:4 (Spring 1988); 12:1 (Summer 1994); 13 1/2 (Summer/Fall 1995); 16 3/4 (Winter/Spring 1999).

Ainsworth Rand Spofford (1825-1908), the sixth Librarian of Congress (1864-1897). See pp. 27-71.