Walt Whitman: A Current Bibliography, Winter/Spring 2018

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WALT WHITMAN: A CURRENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Athenot, Éric, and Cristanne Miller, eds. *Whitman and Dickinson: A Colloquy*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2017. [Collection of eleven original essays on intersections between Whitman and Dickinson, each essay listed separately in this bibliography; with an “Introduction: Transatlantic Convergences and New Directions” (1-8) by Athenot and Miller.]


Camboni, Marina. “‘Beginners’: Rereading Whitman and Dickinson through Rich’s Lens.” In Éric Athenot and Cristanne Miller, eds., *Whitman and Dickinson: A Colloquy* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2017), 207-223. [Examines “three different phases in Adrienne Rich’s interpretive process of Emily Dickinson’s and Walt Whitman’s work,” while also analyzing “the relationship linking the three poets together”; argues that “when Rich ceased to consider Dickinson and Whitman as opposites negating one another and envisioned them instead as relational complementaries she became . . . the poet capable of leaving behind the legacy both of nineteenth-century patriarchal sex-gender isolating antagonisms and of the separatist and oppositional logic of twentieth-century feminisms and ethnic and racial essentialisms.”]

Conrad, CA. “From Whitman to WalMart.” *Poetry Foundation* (June 18, 2015), poetryfoundation.org. [Describes the author’s “Whitman awakening,” when he discovered that Whitman made racist comments in his prose and decid-
ed Whitman is “just like the other white supremacists where I grew up,” “the underside of the rock that America has so beautifully constructed to fool the world.”]

Dorkin, Andrew, and Cristanne Miller. “Hyperbole and Humor in Whitman and Dickinson.” In Éric Athenot and Cristanne Miller, eds., Whitman and Dickinson: A Colloquy (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2017), 129-148. [Argues that, for Whitman and Dickinson, “the figure of hyperbole is both intrinsically linked with humor and a key element in what makes both poets’ work at once colloquially familiar and radically disorienting,” and that, “rather than ridiculing others or satirizing nineteenth-century life, Whitman and Dickinson use humor to encourage readers to think through the challenges of their poetics and poems.”]


Dussol, Vincent. “Whitman, Dickinson, and Their Legacy of Lists and ‘It’s.” In Éric Athenot and Cristanne Miller, eds., Whitman and Dickinson: A Colloquy (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2017), 187-205. [Examines how Whitman and Dickinson “share common features, most notably the combination of lists and indefinites (‘it’ in particular) to give body to the idea that we mean more than we can say”; argues that Dickinson’s lists are shorter than Whitman’s because “her often prominent use of the indefinite ‘it’ is probably both a conscious and an ironic substitute for other possible translations of the ineffable, longer lists among them,” while “Whitman’s use of the indefinite ‘it’ testifies to an unslaked and fully embraced thirst for exhaustiveness,” with both poets thus “showing awareness of language’s impossible completion”; concludes by tracing a poetic tradition, deriving from Whitman and Dickinson, of using ‘it’ in similarly suggestive and disorienting ways.]

Erkkila, Betsy. “Radical Imaginaries: Crossing Over with Whitman and Dickinson.” In Éric Athenot and Cristanne Miller, eds., Whitman and Dickinson: A Colloquy (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2017), 149-169. [Proposes that, although Whitman and Dickinson have often been treated by critics as “diametrical opposites of each other,” they “both were not only sex radicals but radical imaginaries in the nineteenth-century United
States, . . . in conversation with each other, and mutually illuminating in relation to the major political, social, sexual, racial, and cultural struggles that marked their time and ours”; goes on to “sketch out several instances of personal and poetic intercourse between Whitman and Dickinson,” with sections on “Politics,” “The American 1848,” “Radical Imaginaries,” “Love Crisis,” “The Civil War,” and “Immortality,” seeking to illuminate how their “unsettled and unsettling interiors existed inside rather than outside the political and social struggles of their times.”]

Fernanda Pampín, María. “La tradición norteamericana en José Martí entre filosofía y literatura.” *Anales de Literatura Hispanoamericana* 45 (2016), 47-73. [Examines Cuban writer José Martí’s interest in American philosophy and literature, and argues that his responses to Emerson’s and Whitman’s work relocate him to the center of the nineteenth-century Western canon; in Spanish.]


Folsom, Ed. “Rethinking the (Non)Convergence of Dickinson and Whitman.” In Éric Athenot and Cristanne Miller, eds., *Whitman and Dickinson: A Colloquy* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2017), 9-26. [Traces the complex history of what works of Whitman would have been accessible to Dickinson, and what works of Dickinson would have been accessible to Whitman, and shows how the creation of Whitman and Dickinson as the founding poets of the American poetic tradition was the work of two warring Transcendentalists, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Thomas Wentworth Higginson; documents the publishing intersections of Dickinson and Whitman and shows for the first time that Whitman definitely did know who Emily Dickinson was.]


to India’ encapsulates exactly the ghost of the ‘White Horseman’ that Alexander tried to exorcise in the poem”; sets out to “show how Whitman and Alexander establish and re-configure national and transnational poetic discourses,” and examines “how Alexander starts from the conceptual and formal openings established by Whitman and how she then proceeds to create a genuinely different kind of transnational Indian-American poetic space from what the nineteenth-century poet had and could have envisioned.”

Gerhardt, Christine. “‘We Must Travel Abreast with Nature, if We Want to Understand Her’: Place and Mobility in Dickinson’s and Whitman’s Environmental Poetry.” In Éric Athenot and Cristanne Miller, eds., Whitman and Dickinson: A Colloquy (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2017), 111-128. [Acknowledges how ecocritical analyses of Whitman and Dickinson have argued that “what is environmentally most significant about their work is its keen attention to local realms and lasting forms of place-attachment,” but proposes that these poets also “wrote about places characterized by remarkable degrees of mobility and engaged the world from perspectives of speakers who are themselves on the move, all in the context of an increasingly mobile American culture and transnational dynamics of travel, exploration, and colonization”; goes on to examine how their “abiding interest in a mobile world, and in mobile ways of relating to such a world, forms an integral part of their environmental imagination and constitutes an important connection between their bodies of work”: “both engaged with precisely the tension between mobility and rootedness at this watershed moment in the development of a modern ecological outlook and practice.”]

Goode, Abby L. “Democratic Demographics: A Literary Genealogy of American Sustainability.” Ph.D. Dissertation, Rice University, 2016. [Chapter 4 “traces Walt Whitman’s development of eugenic agrarianism—a discourse that adapts American sustainability to a global context”; Proquest Dissertations and Theses Global; DAI-A 79/04(E).]

Grossman, Jay. “Queer Contingencies of Canonicity: Dickinson, Whitman, Jewett, Matthiessen.” In Éric Athenot and Cristanne Miller, eds., Whitman and Dickinson: A Colloquy (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2017), 171-185. [Analyzes Dickinson’s exclusion from F. O. Matthiessen’s influential American Renaissance (1941) and rethinks that exclusion by taking “a closer look at Matthiessen’s interest in Dickinson, as well as the terms
within which his understanding of her writing sharpens our understanding
of his reading of Emerson’s and Whitman’s poetry”; concludes by consider-
ing how Matthiessen’s student Adrienne Rich extended his thinking about
Dickinson, becoming “the student teaching her teacher.”]

Haslam, Jason. “Punishing Utopia: Whitman, Hawthorne, and the Terrible
Prison.” Arizona Quarterly 73 (Autumn 2017), 1-22. [Evokes Victor
Brombert’s notion of “The Happy Prison,” a literary construct wherein
“the materiality of physical incarceration melts away in the face of spir-
Itual, intellectual, or otherwise creative transcendence on behalf of the
self-contained, post-Enlightenment subject, a transcendence enabled by the
isolation provided in the prison cell,” and examines how this construct “is
haunted and supported by its dehumanizing double: the “Terrible Prison’’;
argues that Whitman’s “The Singer in Prison” is a “Happy Prison” poem
that “already has its double chained to it, in the form of the material pris-
oner that is left over as an unnameable remainder of reformatory prison
practices and their literary echoes in the Happy Prison”; and compares
Whitman’s poem to Hawthorne’s Blithedale Romance in terms of how “the
early penitentiary had lying in its heart both a theoretical and a very much
acknowledged praxis of terror that simultaneously supported and under-
mined its supposedly humanitarian goals.”]

Hellman, Jesse M. “Grace Gilchrist’s Childish Jealousy and Bernard Shaw’s
Idiotic Thoughtlessness.” Shaw: The Journal of Bernard Shaw Studies 37,
no. 2 (2017), 227-244. [Examines Bernard Shaw’s relationship, in the 1880s,
to Anne Gilchrist’s family, particularly his affection for Anne’s daughter
Grace; notes Shaw’s admiration for Whitman; and suggests how “Anne
Gilchrist’s passionate pursuit of Walt Whitman . . . may have contributed
to, and become fulfilled, in Shaw’s creation of Ann Whitefield” in Man
and Superman.]

Karbiener, Karen. Review of Walt Whitman, Song of Myself: With a Complete
Commentary by Ed Folsom and Christopher Merrill. Walt Whitman
Quarterly Review 35 (Fall 2017), 201-206.

Lawrimore, David. “Temperance, Abolition, and Genre Collision in
Whitman’s Franklin Evans.” Studies in American Fiction 44 (Fall 2017),
185-209. [Examines how the Washingtonian temperance narrative and the
Garrisonian antislavery narrative have “shared ideological elements—part-
icularly the belief in the progressive nature of their society’s ill which requires
immediate eradication,” with both insisting that “the logic of gradualism
is foundationally flawed”; goes on to analyze how “the Margaret Episode” in Whitman’s *Franklin Evans*, which keys elements of “the pro-slavery romance,” creates a “collision” of genres in the novel as Whitman tries unsuccessfully to “subordinate the pro-slavery romance to the logic of the temperance narrative,” a singular narrative experiment that “fails to gain traction and ultimately goes extinct.”

Leader, Jennifer. “‘No Man Saw Awe’ / ‘In the Talk of . . . God . . . He Is Silent’: (Not) Seeing and (Not) Saying the Numinous in Dickinson and Whitman.” In Éric Athenot and Cristanne Miller, eds., *Whitman and Dickinson: A Colloquy* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2017), 65-83. [Argues that Whitman and Dickinson “both had keen, startlingly original, religious imaginations and were explicit in their insistence on the spiritual components of their visions, despite a heterodox inventiveness that was (in Whitman’s case) or would have been (in Dickinson’s), offensive to a majority of the Christian reading public”; uses the poets’ divergent religious backgrounds (Quaker for Whitman, Reformed for Dickinson) to inform our understanding of the ways they both invoke “a non-anthropomorphic and numinous Other as a limit to set [their] own poetic acumen in relief,” though “Dickinson’s spiritual and poetic universe is far less democratic than Whitman’s.”]

McGough, Roger. “I Hear America Sighing (after Walt Whitman).” *New Statesman* 147 (January 26-February 1, 2018), 45. [Poem, beginning “I hear America sighing, the varied complaints I hear,” and ending, “Stop sighing America, start singing. Time to come back.”]

McInnes, Marion K. “Following You: Second Person in Walt Whitman’s ‘As I Ebb’d with the Ocean of Life.’” *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 35 (Fall 2017), 153-173. [Explores “the different ways Whitman puts the second person ‘you’ to work,” including “the strangest second person of all—the moments when instead of using the second person pronoun ‘you,’ and almost in its place, he conjures up in his mind’s eye a ghostly second person split off from himself and standing at a distance, but nevertheless still himself in a new guise”; follows the “rhetorical chaos” of Whitman’s use of second person in “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking” and especially in “As I Ebb’d with the Ocean of Life,” tracking the use of apostrophes and “apostrophes-within-apostrophes” and Whitman’s distinctive “proleptic apostrophe” as he follows “the ‘trails of debris’ along the shore” and encourages us to “push through self-doubt even when it is disguised to look like authority.”]

Miller, Mark. “Song of the Open Road.” 2018. [Cantata based on Whitman’s
“Song of the Open Road,” performed by the Harmonium Choral Society in Morristown, New Jersey, in March 2018.]

Molina, Sergio. “Song of the Universal: Quintet No. 2 for Piano and Guitar Quartet.” 2017. [Quintet based on Whitman’s “Song of the Universal”; world premiere at Round Top Festival Hill Institute in Texas, in March 2018, by the Quaternaglia Guitar Quartet with James Dick, pianist.]  

Noble, Marianne. “Phenomenological Approaches to Human Contact in Whitman and Dickinson.” In Éric Athenot and Cristanne Miller, eds., Whitman and Dickinson: A Colloquy (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2017), 85-110. [Investigates how Dickinson and Whitman “engage the philosophical question of what it means to contact others,” and how “both reject their own received metaphysical thoughts and reconceive the nature of human identity—and contact between human selves—by refusing to separate matter and spirit,” thus turning “away from Romantic idealism and toward twentieth-century phenomenology,” thinking “beyond dualisms” and finding “human contact as possible, though different from what they had first imagined”; goes on to examine how both poets foreground “the presence of the writer in the act of writing,” how both “explore the idea that the self does not antedate the act of writing but instead is created in it,” and how “both also depict intersubjective selves, selves that exist only in relation to others.”]

Parmar, Nissa. Multicultural Poetics: Re-visioning the American Canon. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2018. [Chapter 1, “Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman: The ‘Beginners’” (31-70), investigates “the revolutionary, hybrid, and democratic nature of Whitman and Dickinson’s poetic form” and how “blurring boundaries, mixing, and the signature techniques of each poet—Whitman’s catalogues and free verse and Dickinson’s dashes—exemplify their intention to create poetic forms that reflected the democratic ideologies of the nation’s inception and rebelled against the Eurocentric culture and canon that continued to dominate American culture and inform social structures despite over fifty years of political independence”; goes on to suggest how “their political revolutions were driven by America’s post-colonial status and part of an effort to forge a distinctly American, culturally and socially reflective poetic”; and argues that the work of these two poets, “Whitman’s in particular,” is “intended to lead to the emergent poets and poeticies of the late twentieth century”; later chapters suggest Whitman’s influence in the work of William Carlos Williams, Adrienne Rich, Marilyn Chin, and Sherman Alexie.]
Raymond, Brytani L. “Whitman and the Elegy: Mythologizing Lincoln and the Poetic Reconstruction of Mourning.” M.A. Thesis, Eastern Kentucky University, 2017. [Examines “Whitman’s series of elegies following the death of Abraham Lincoln” in order “to demonstrate that [Whitman’s] process of grief could not be broken down to a simple formula as suggested by past elegists”; Proquest Dissertations and Theses Global (MAI 57/02M).]


Roudeau, Cécile. “‘Sickly Abstractions’ and the Poetic Concrete: Whitman’s and Dickinson’s Battlefields of War.” In Éric Athenot and Cristanne Miller, eds., Whitman and Dickinson: A Colloquy (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2017), 27-46. [Examines how the Civil War, for Whitman and Dickinson, “pushed poetry to its crisis,” so that their poems “both confronted the ‘litter of the battlefield’ and the clutter of the Real with the injunction to write in spite of the disarticulation between world and word”; finds that “Dickinson and Whitman's are sentient battlefields in which the feeling of the Real emerges through the violent conflagration between the abstract and the concrete,” and “abstraction itself is exposed, made palpable in its wounded, derelict, becoming” so that “poetic language proves the locus of its excruciating and paradoxical embodiment.”]

Schöberlein, Stefan. “Walt Whitman.” In George Parker Anderson, ed., Dictionary of Literary Biography, vol. 381: Writers on Women’s Rights and United States Suffrage (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale [Bruccoli Clark Layman], 2018), 287-296. [Examines how Whitman’s “literary life falls squarely into the height of the first wave of the Women’s Rights Movement in the United States,” from his “early success as a journalist and editor at the time of the convention at Seneca Falls (1848) and Worcester (1850) to the first states in the union granting women the right to vote in the early 1890s, at around the time the poet’s ‘deathbed edition’ of Leaves of Grass came out”; reviews how, over his career, Whitman “advocated for women’s equal status in the American democratic experiment, associated himself with what might be considered the radical feminists and queer activists of his day at home and across the Atlantic, defended female work and women’s labor rights, endured his books being banned for obscenity, adorned himself in women’s clothes, and volunteered as a caretaker alongside female nurses in soldiers’
hospitals,” as well as creating “a radically new kind of verse that would emphasize, unlike any American poetry before him, a fundamental sense of equality between men and women.”]

Shames, David. “Leaves of Whitman: Felipe, Borges and the Hybrid Translator.” Colloquy: Text Theory Critique 32 (September 2016), 37-64 [http://artsonline.monash.edu.au/colloquy]. [Examines “some of the transatlantic exchanges which shaped Whitman’s reception in the world of Hispanic letters” and analyzes specifically “the fierce polemic which erupted” between Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges and Spanish poet Léon Felipe over “how to translate Whitman,” a debate that “highlight[s] a number of aesthetic, philosophical, and political questions which relate to the historical context in which each translation was produced”; goes on to “unpack the ways in which Borges and Felipe read a key disjunctive element in Whitman’s ‘Song of Myself’—the fluctuating relationship between self and other,” thus shedding light “on the matrix of aesthetic and political ideologies which Borges and Felipe encounter in Whitman, which they were informed by at the time of their translations and which, in turn, become encoded through their translations.”]

Shelly, Kevin C. “Walt Whitman’s Final Resting Place: A Hillside Crypt in Camden He Designed.” Philly Voice, phillyvoice.com. [Offers background on why Whitman ended up buried in Camden, New Jersey, and reports on how his grave is now listed on several “LGBTQ tourism sites,” called by one such site one of the “coolest, most inspiring LGBTQ+ landmarks in the world.”]

Shor, Cynthia, ed. Starting from Paumanok . . . 30 (Summer/Fall/Winter 2017). [Newsletter of Walt Whitman Birthplace Association, with news of association activities, including the announcement of Vijay Seshadri as the 2018 Walt Whitman Birthplace Poet-in-Residence.]

Simpatico, David. Wilde about Whitman. 2017. [Two-man play about Oscar Wilde’s visit to Whitman in Camden, New Jersey, in 1882; premiere reading took place at the Bridge Street Theatre in Catskill, NY, in August 2017; performed by A Howl of Playwrights; originally completed as an MFA Thesis at Southern New Hampshire University, 2017.]

Steinroetter, Vanessa. “Walt Whitman in the Early Kansas Press.” Kansas History 39 (Autumn 2016), 182-193. [Reviews Whitman’s 1879 Western trip through Kansas and examines how Whitman was portrayed in Kansas
newspapers during that trip and in the years before and after it, noting the “range of responses to the poet, from laudatory to critical and irreverent”; also looks at Whitman’s poetry that was reprinted in Kansas papers, and points to one 1882 piece in the *Weekly Kansas Chief* that offers a detailed “tongue-in-cheek account of a meeting and conversation between Whitman and Oscar Wilde,” remarkable for its emphasis on the “romantic” nature of this “encounter.”]


Vander Zee, Anton. “Whitman’s Late Lives.” *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 35 (Fall 2017), 174-200. [Sets out, through a “survey of various biographical constructions of Whitman in age,” to “hasten a more informed conversation about Whitman’s late life and poetry, a span of time and a body of work that deserves more—and more nuanced—attention in biography and criticism alike”; surveys how Whitman biographers have dealt with Whitman’s later years, from Henry Bryan Binns in 1905 through Jerome Loving in 1999, finding that these biographers have largely ignored “the more complex and layered relationships between Whitman’s late work and his late life.”]

Varzi, Achille C. “‘All the Shadows / Whisper of the Sun’: Carnevali’s
Whitmanesque Simplicity.” Philosophy and Literature 41 (October 2017), 360-374. [Examines in detail Emanuel Carnevali’s (1897-1942) four-line poem entitled “Walt Whitman” that was published in Harriet Monroe’s Poetry magazine in the 1919 Whitman issue; views the poem as Carnevali’s “present to Whitman, like a postcard . . . the watercolor of a moment,” since, for Carnevali, the “Whitman way” was “the way that leads to poetry starting from the small things,” capturing a “Whitmanesque simplicity.”]


Wilder, Burt Green. Recollections of a Civil War Medical Cadet, ed. Richard M. Reid. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2017. [Prints neurologist Burt Green Wilder’s (1841-1925) previously unpublished “recollections of his service as a medical cadet in the Judiciary Square Hospital in Washington, D.C., where he worked in the second half of the [Civil War],” written in 1910; Green did not know Whitman, but encountered the poet’s criticism of Judiciary Square Hospital in Richard Maurice Bucke’s 1898 The Wound Dresser, and he reprints and annotates those criticisms in an unfinished appendix to the manuscript, “Walt Whitman as critic of the Washington hospitals” (118-120).]

Colloquy (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2017), 47-64. [Examines “how the Civil War drew upon . . . biblical traditions” of the “figural sys-
tem” (that “connect[ed] time to eternity, events to integrated pattern, and
self to immortality”) and how “Whitman emerges into figural complexity
when seen from a Dickinsonian perspective,” while “reading Dickinson
with Whitman opens paths toward seeing her engagement in culture”; goes
on to probe how, “for both authors, . . . such figural construction was put
under severe pressure by the Civil War period, in the context of the many
social, historical, and religious transmutations erupting in and through
nineteenth-century America”; concludes that “both poets weave texts out
of multiple figural strands, whose very correspondences are at stake.”]

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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).