Walt Whitman: A Current Bibliography, Summer 2017

Ed Folsom

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Ahrens, Jan Martínez. “Un estudiante descubre una novel perdida del poeta Walt Whitman de hace 165 años.” El País (February 23, 2017). [About the discovery, by Zachary Turpin, of Whitman’s 1852 serialized novella Jack Engle, with comments by David Reynolds about how the novella served as a “laboratory” for Whitman’s poetry; in Spanish.]


Bohan, Ruth L. “Vanity Fair, Whitman, and the Counter Jumper.” Word & Image 33 no. 1 (2017), 57-69. [Investigates how Vanity Fair magazine began its existence in 1860 by frequently satirizing “the much maligned figure of the counter jumper, a male sales clerk in a dry good establishment and a new urban type,” producing “nearly two dozen essays, poems, drawings, and cartoons” that took aim “at issues of identity, effeminacy, and social injustice” by targeting “a figure whose marginalized position mirrored, in a surprising number of ways, the marginalized existence and often subversive behavior” of the Bohemian community of the magazine’s own contributors; notes how Whitman “skewered counter jumpers” in his early journalism
but was “remarkably vulnerable to counter-jumper humor,” and analyzes Whitman “as both a visible target of counter-jumper humor (as demonstrated in Fitz-James O’Brien’s mocking “Counter-Jumps. A Poemettina.—After Walt Whitman”) and, with [illustrator Edward] Mullen’s help, a vigorous resister of the charges.”


Boorse, Michael J., ed. *Song of the Open Road: New Jersey and the Automobile.* Special edition of *Conversations* (Spring 2016). [Printed to coincide with Walt Whitman Association’s special exhibition on the history of the automobile, held at Monmouth Battlefield State Park in Malapan, NJ, May 9, 2015, emphasizing Whitman’s connection to the “open road.”]

Boughn, Michael, John Bradley, Brenda Cárdenas, Lunne DeSilva-Johnson, Kass Fleisher, Roberto Harrison, Kent Johnson, Andrew Levy, Nathaniel Mackey, Rubén Medina, Philip Metres, Nita Noveno, Julie Patton, Margaret Randall, Michael Rothenberg, Chris Stroffolino, Anne Waldman, Marjorie Welsh, and Tyrone Williams, eds. *Resist Much, Obey Little: Inaugural Poems to the Resistance.* New York: Spuyten Duyvil, 2017. [Anthology of poetry that sets out to be “a collective, insurgent call that is part and parcel of a sovereign people’s challenge to a narcissistic oligarch and his lackeys,” “bound in direct, literal ways, to the historic worldwide marches of January 22nd [2017],” demonstrating how “today’s poets . . . are united in resistance to the politics of greed, intimidation, and divisiveness”; title borrowed from Whitman; evokes Whitman in the introduction (“We need to be with Whitman”); and concludes with Whitman’s “Respondez.”]


Whitman “could have become a significant novel writer”; in German.


Charis-Carlson, Jeff. “Noteworthy Rediscovery: UI Introduces Public to a Forgotten 165-Year-Old Walt Whitman Novel.” *Iowa City Press-Citizen* (February 21, 2017), 1A, 3A. [Reports on Zachary Turpin’s discovery of a previously unknown 1852 novella by Whitman, called *Life and Adventures of Jack Engle*, now published online in the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* and available as a print book by the University of Iowa Press; emphasizes the University’s involvement in publishing and publicizing the find.]

Cohen, Anthony Gus. “Orbic Bards: Religious Liberalism and the Problems of Representation in the Postbellum Works of Walt Whitman and Herman Melville.” M.A. Thesis, University of Texas at El Paso, 2016. [Examines “the collision, and subsequent negotiations” between rationalism and spirituality in some of the postbellum works of Melville and Whitman, focusing on their “profound democratic spirituality” and on ways that these writers use the “poetics of Nature and Reason” to “grapple with the problems they see in their contemporary religious and civil institutions, the historical and poetic record, and most importantly, their own faith and doubt”; Chapter 2 focuses on *Democratic Vistas* and Whitman’s “later, globally themed poetry”; Proquest Dissertations and Theses Global (MAI 56/03M).]

Cohen, Matt. *Whitman’s Drift: Imagining Literary Distribution*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2017. [Investigates “the relationship between imaginary and material disseminations of literary works, as embodied in Whitman’s career” and demonstrates how “Whitman’s career, poetry, and market presence revise the story of nineteenth-century modes of distribution, showing them to be surprisingly international, persistently unstable, and patently unpredictable” as they “fueled Whitman’s and his fellow authors’ imaginations of America, the world, and poetic practice”; argues that “a more rigorously specific and historically sensitive approach to the analysis of literature in relation to transmission patterns can yield insights into [Whitman’s] aesthetic practices,” and that “the literal drifting of his work, its finding the right readers through not just commercial but intimate and seemingly random pathways, was as important as the transcendent ‘drift’ of meaning that left print and even words behind in the name of human connection.”]
Collins, Susan. “Nationalisms, Modernisms and Masculinities: Strategies of Displacement in Vaughan Williams’s Reading of Walt Whitman.” *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 14 (2017), 65-91. [Challenges the prevailing notion that “Whitman’s musical reception in early-twentieth-century Britain was largely confined to the idea of Whitman as sage, or Whitman as democrat—the mystical or political Whitman, carefully separated from the corporeal or sensual Whitman,” and re-examines Vaughan Williams’ “reading of Whitman, because it suggests that his efforts to de-eroticize Whitman were part of a dialogue with Whitman’s Victorian reception, rather than being a repudiation of the corporeal elements of Whitman’s verse, or even an ignorance thereof, as some have suggested”; contends “that the persistence of Whitman’s appeal across the late-Victorian literary sphere and the early-twentieth-century musical sphere suggests an underlying continuity of concerns that has been obscured by narratives of rupture and de-eroticization,” and argues “that the basis of this underlying continuity can be described in terms of a desire to balance sameness and difference—an aspiration that found expression across a range of intellectual spheres,” including “debates about male–male bonds in the late-nineteenth century literary sphere and about the relationship between nationalism and internationalism in the early-twentieth-century musical sphere,” as well as “persistent concerns with the extent to which an artist should remain autonomous from social and political commitment.”]


Crandall, Jennifer. *Whitman, Alabama* (Birmingham, AL: Alabama Media Group, 2017), whitmanalabama.com. [Fifty-two-part documentary film, each part dedicated to “Alabamians from every pocket and corner of the state” sharing “moments of their lives on camera as we capture them reciting verses from Walt Whitman’s ‘Song of Myself’”; each of the videos is dedicated to one section of the poem, released weekly on the website for one year.]


Freund, Wieland. “Unbekannter Roman von Walt Whitman entdeckt.” Die Welt (February 21, 2017), 8-9. [Reports on Zachary Turpin’s discovery of Whitman’s 1852 serialized novella, Life and Adventures of Jack Engle; reads the novella as Whitman’s embrace of multiculturalism and lauds it for its vivid descriptions of New York City; claims the discovery of Jack Engle is a timely counterweight to Donald Trump’s inauguration speech, stating it is “as if the man, who once was America, had send a letter in a bottle to 2017”; in German; also reprinted in Die Welt Kompakt and published online on February 20, 2017.]


Goodman, Jeff. “Grand Is the Seen: Frank Lloyd Wright’s Personal Notes on Leaves of Grass.” Frank Lloyd Wright Quarterly 27 (Fall 2016), 24-29. [Notes Wright’s devotion to Whitman’s work and reprints pages from Wright’s personal copy of the 1860 Leaves of Grass, with the architect’s annotations (including his alteration of a line in “Chants Democratic 1,” where Whitman’s “Give me to speak beautiful words!” becomes “Give me to build beautiful buildings!”).]
Gould, Mitchell Santine. “Walt Whitman of the New York Aurora: Editor, Transcendentalist, Quaker, Perfectionist.” Quaker Theology no. 28 (Spring-Summer 2016), 52-72. [Offers a “close reading of six snippets regarding Transcendentalism” published in the New York Aurora in 1842, arguing that Whitman did not write the piece on Emerson’s lecture on “Poetry of the Times” (as has been generally assumed), but proposing that he well might have written the piece on Transcendentalism the following day, since it associates Transcendentalism with Hicksite Quaker Perfectionism and Inner Light, rendering Transcendentalism as “the secularization of Quaker theology,” endorsing Elias Hicks’s “‘radical’ spiritual testimony” and his “‘ultra’ Perfectionist message: Brotherly Love could have an erotic side.”]


Heise, Ulf. “Das Buch, das Walt Whitman nie veröffentlichen wollte.” MDR Kultur (Leipzig, Germany: Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk, June 1, 2017), mdr.de. [Radio program on the discovery of Whitman’s 1852 serialized novella, Life and Adventures of Jack Engle; lauds its “strong, realistic character descriptions” and its balancing of tragedy with comedy; concludes that Jack Engle, even on its own, makes Whitman “worthy to be elevated to the status of literary nobility”; in German]

Hintermeier, Hannes. “Whitman’s vergessene Werke: Übersetzerrennen.” Frankfurter Allgemeine (April 21, 2017). [About the discovery by Zachary Turpin of Whitman’s 1852 novella Life and Adventures of Jack Engle, and about the “translation race” the discovery has set off in Germany, as three publishers are working to get German translations into print; in German.]

Ifill, Matthew L. “The Tomb Affair.” Conversations (Winter 2016-2017), 1-8. [Examines in detail “Whitman’s legal scuffles over the price of his resting place and the long-drawn out battle over the cost of dying,” including the roles of Harleigh Cemetery’s superintendent Ralph Moore and the tomb builder J. E. Reinhalter, who apparently admitted to altering the contract
for the tomb after Whitman had signed it; tracks Thomas Harned’s legal intervention on Whitman’s behalf, the final settlement, and the lingering questions over the controversy; concludes by explaining how the remaining seven crypts in Whitman’s tomb came to be filled with the bodies of Whitman’s mother, father, brother Edward, brother George and his wife Louisa and their son Walter, and Whitman’s sister Hannah; also recounts Whitman’s insistence in the last months of his life that his two dead children (of the five that he claimed he had fathered by one or two Southern women) be buried in the tomb (nothing came of this, of course).]


Krull, John. “As American Voice, Whitman Echoes through Time.” Kokomo Tribune (May 16, 2017). [Describes re-reading the 1892 Leaves of Grass and thinking about “why this book touches me so,” and why “I find myself drawn to it in times of trouble, such as this one, when we Americans are at each other’s throats and storm clouds of despair hover over the land.”]


Mariani, Andrea. Italian Music in Dakota: The Function of European Musical Theater in U.S. Culture. Göttingen, Germany: V&R Unipress, 2017. [Explores “the intersection between European opera and some major figures in the literature of the United States—how it was received, what it meant, how it was textually ‘exploited,’—in other words, its literary function and the role it played in helping some great masters of the canon to express themselves, their ideas, their feelings, and their Weltanschauung”; Chapter 3, “Walt
Whitman” (69-101), investigates opera’s impact on Whitman’s work, especially through extended close readings of “Proud Music of the Storm” and “Italian Music in Dakota.”]

McCarthy, Daniel, and Margaret Guardi. “The Southold-Walt Whitman Connection.” *Peconic Bay Shopper* (March 2017), 6-9. [Recounts and raises questions about Katherine Molinoff’s 1966 claim (repeated by David Reynolds and others) that Whitman taught school at Southold, Long Island, and was run out of town because of unacceptable behavior with one or more male students; points to evidence that casts doubt on Molinoff’s claims.]

McGarvey, Kathleen. “What Would Walt Whitman Say?” *Rochester Review* 70 (May-June 2017), 48-49. [Interview with Ed Folsom about how to read Whitman’s work, the significance of his newly discovered novella (*Jack Engle*), and what he has to teach us about democracy; with a timeline of major events in Whitman’s life.]

McWilliams, James. “Before a Million Universes.” *Paris Review* (May 22, 2017), parisreview.org. [Considers how “the radical efficiency of the digitized archive has motivated scholars to design research agendas around searchable terms,” and offers Zachary Turpin as “an example of this new type of researcher,” as evidenced in his discovery of *Life and Adventures of Jack Engle*, “a novel that Whitman had serialized anonymously in an obscure New York newspaper”; worries that “Turpin’s brand of scholarly fortitude, rare as it is, threatens to privilege digital discovery over analog interpretation”: “it’s hard not to feel perplexed about Walt’s reputation as technology and scholarly fortitude converge to hone in on his secret work.”]

Meiman, Meg. “Documentation for the Public: Social Editing in *The Walt Whitman Archive*.” *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities* 31 (December 2016), 317-328. [Examines the *Walt Whitman Archive* (whitmanarchive.org) as “an ideal case study” for how “digital literary collections continue to expand their scope and to broaden their audience, documenting the collaborative editorial work involved in creating these collections—and rendering that documentation transparent for its users”; concludes that the *Whitman Archive* “at once renders more visible the iterative process involved in editorial work, and makes the publicly accessible documentation of that process part of its infrastructure.”]

Turpin’s discovery of Whitman’s 1852 serialized novella *Life and Adventures of Jack Engle*; claims that *Jack Engle* “presents the benefits of a multicultural society, consisting here of the Irish, Italians and Germans, Quakers, Catholics and Jews,” and concludes that *Jack Engle* “describes pretty much the opposite of what the new president [Trump] wants to achieve with his massively isolationist and xenophobic policies”; in German.


Müller, Lothar. “Ein Vagabund findet ins bürgerliche Leben.” *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (February 27, 2017), 12. [Reports on Zachary Turpin’s discovery of Whitman’s 1852 serialized novella, *Life and Adventures of Jack Engle*; introduces Whitman’s work through the TV series *Breaking Bad* and contrasts *Jack Engle* with *Franklin Evans*, suggesting that Whitman should not have been embarrassed by the former; traces some Dickensian echoes in the novella and concludes by stating how “strange it is that the first literary discovery of the Trump era is a New York novella by Walt Whitman”; also published online on February 26, 2017; in German.]


novella’s “almost casual anti-Semitism, which gratefully figures very little.”]

Piepenbring, Dan. “Lessons on Male Insecurity (and Indigestion) from Walt Whitman’s Men’s-Health Column.” New Yorker (March 21, 2017), newyorker.com. [Examines Whitman’s Manly Health and Training; finds that Whitman’s articles “brim with piquant digressions and bumptious, often contradictory advice on diet, exercise, and beauty,” but finally form “a fascinating document of male insecurity”: “Manly Health is brittle where ‘Leaves of Grass’ is supple, nervous where ‘Leaves of Grass’ is unencumbered,” revealing “Whitman as an intimate of malady.”]


Price, Kenneth M. “The Walt Whitman Archive and the Prospects for Social Editing.” Digital Scholarship in the Humanities 31 (December 2016), 866-874. [Considers “both the problems and perils of ‘social editing’ [and] ‘crowdsourcing’” and examines “to what extent . . . users of electronic projects such as the Walt Whitman Archive might help address “the extensive and costly work that stands in the way of the realization of a digital scholarly edition,” taking into consideration the issue of “quality control.”]


Rothman, Joshua. “The Claustrophobic Paranoia of Walt Whitman’s Lost Novel.” New Yorker (March 23, 2017), newyorker.com. [Discusses the recent discovery of Whitman’s lost novella, Life and Adventures of Jack Engle, and concludes that, “compared to ‘Leaves of Grass,’ ‘Jack Engle’ feels cynical, claustrophobic, and paranoid,” offering “a certain view of the world”: “in this view, the apparently freewheeling liberalism of urban life is a lie; it’s money and violence that make the city run”—“Growing up means grasping the subterranean connections that link us and trying, though love, to redeem them.”]


Scanlon, Mara. “‘Afoot with my vision’: Whitmania and Tourism in the Digital Age.” In Jennifer Harris and Hilary Iris Lowe, eds., *From Page to Place: American Literary Tourism and the Afterlives of Authors* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2017), 107-124. [Recounts the experiences of taking a Whitman class on several excursions of “literary tourism,” and compares the pleasures and disappointments of both “digital and corporeal tourism,” noting the Whitman riches online that can be experienced “second or third hand” but noting too the magic of actual “presence” when standing on the Fredericksburg battlefield, touring the poet’s Camden home and gravesite, or seeing “first hand” Whitman’s manuscripts and artifacts (like the haversack he carried in the Civil War hospitals).]

Schöberlein, Stefan. “Dinosaurs in Iowa. Or: On Reading Fossils.” *South Central Review* 34 (Spring 2017), 68-92. [Examines post-nineteenth-century literary texts about fossils through the work of Charles Lyell and Martin Heidegger, reading these texts as “pre-history to the current discussion over life in the so-called Anthropocene”; examines Whitman’s “The World below the Brine,” finding there a “channeling of geological time” akin to the geological time-scales used by scientists in the wake of Lyell.]

Schuessler, Jennifer. “Path to ‘Leaves’ in Lost Novel by Whitman.” *New York Times* (February 21, 2017), A1, A18. [Reports on Zachary Turpin’s discovery of a previously unknown 1852 novella by Whitman, called *Life and Adventures of Jack Engle*, now published online in the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* and available as a print book by the University of Iowa Press; quotes Ed Folsom and David Reynolds on the importance of the find. This story was reprinted in many newspapers in the U.S. and internationally; published online in the *New York Times* as “In a Walt Whitman Novel, Lost for 165 Years, Clues to ‘Leaves of Grass.’”]

Schüler, Lotar. “Walt Whitman.” *Kulturzeit* (Mainz, Germany: 3Sat, May 22, 2017), 3sat.de [Television segment, summarizing Whitman’s poetic project; mentions his early life as a writer of popular fiction; features short readings and analyses by poet Nico Bleutge; in German.]

Stacy, Jason. “Walt Whitman’s Journalism.” *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 34

Tolentino, Jia. “Reciting Walt Whitman at a Drug Court in Alabama.” New Yorker (March 20, 2017), newyorker.com. [Describes filmmaker Jennifer Crandall’s “new documentary project, ‘Whitman, Alabama,’” in which a diverse group of Alabamans read all 52 sections of “Song of Myself” in a variety of settings, with a new documentary film for each section appearing weekly for a year; recounts Crandall’s own history of encounters with Whitman, and focuses on Judge John Graham’s reading of Section 37 in a Scottsboro, Alabama, courtroom.]


Ward, Alyson. “A UH Grad Student’s Big Find: An Unknown Novel by Walt Whitman.” Houston Chronicle (February 20, 2017), houstonchronicle.com. [Reports on Zachary Turpin’s discovery of a previously unknown 1852 novella by Whitman, called Life and Adventures of Jack Engle, now published online in the Walt Whitman Quarterly Review and available as a print book by the University of Iowa Press; quotes Ed Folsom on the importance of the find.]

Wazer, Caroline. “Is This Actually a Photo of Walt Whitman in the Buff?” History Buff (December 23, 2015), historybuff.com. [Examines the controversy over Ed Folsom’s suggestion that the “old man” in Thomas Eakins’ series of photos of a nude male might be Whitman.]


Whitman’s novella into Turkish.]

Whitman, Walt. *Das abenteuerliche Leben des Jack Engle* [Life and Adventures of Jack Engle]. Translated by Stefan Schöberlein. Berlin: Das Kulturelle Gedächtnis, 2017. [German translation of Whitman’s 1852 novella *Jack Engle*, with 25 illustrations, 33 annotations, a short biography (185-188) and translations of five journalistic pieces by Whitman (153-172); also includes an afterword by Schöberlein (174-188), contextualizing the novella and claiming that, based on Whitman’s contemporary journalism, “there are indications that initial drafts for *Jack Engle* were already written [in the early 1840s]”; in German.]

Whitman, Walt. *Jack Engles Leben und Abenteuer* [Life and Adventures of Jack Engle]. Translated by Renate Orth-Guttmann and Irma Wehrli. Munich: Manesse, 2017. [German translation of Whitman’s 1852 novella *Jack Engle*, with 26 annotations; also includes an afterword by Wieland Freund (171-182), contextualizing the novella biographically and arguing that it might provide “hints about the specific period in which Whitman became the poet of *Leaves of Grass*” (176) and claiming that, because of *Jack Engle*’s comparatively tame content, the novella serves as a strong indicator “that Whitman had begun to write his radically different poetry much later [than 1847], probably not before 1854”; in German.]


Yang, Jeffrey. “The ‘Sea-Salt’ in Walt Whitman’s Poetry.” *New Yorker* (March 22, 2017), newyorker.com. [Meditates on “the centrality of the ocean in Whitman’s work” and ways that “the manifold cipher of the sea frames the shores of Whitman’s poetry.”]


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“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).