Walt Whitman: A Current Bibliography

Ed Folsom

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Aćamović, Bojana. “Whitman’s ‘Barbaric Yawp’ Sounded in Serbian.” Rocznik Komparatystyczny / Comparative Yearbook 4 (2013), 313-319. [Examines the “significant differences” in four Serbian translations of Whitman’s “barbaric yawn” line from Section 52 of “Song of Myself”; translations considered include those by Ivo Andrić (1919), Tin Ujević (1969), Ivan V. Lalić (1985), and Dragan Purešić (2008); goes on to suggest how the “barbaric” nature of Whitman’s poetry influenced the Yugoslav avant-garde movement known as Zenitism.]

Athenot, Éric. “To Yawp, Or Not To Yawp: French Translators and Whitman’s Distinctive Idiom.” Rocznik Komparatystyczny / Comparative Yearbook 4 (2013), 287-297. [Examines eight French translations— “from the trailblazing [Léon] Bazagette text (1909) to the latest [Jacques] Darras volume (2002)” — of Whitman’s “barbaric yawn” line from Section 52 of “Song of Myself”; concludes that “what all the versions of the line demonstrate is not only the vexed and antiquated notion of an illusory or even unwished-for ‘faithfulness’ to the original but the various routes that one language takes to accommodate realities—the yawn in particular—that do not exist in it.”]


Azov, Andrey. “‘Barbaric Yawp’ in Russian.” Rocznik Komparatystyczny / Comparative Yearbook 4 (2013), 322-325. [Examines Kornei Chukovsky’s multiple translations of Whitman’s “barbaric yawn” line in Section 52 of “Song of Myself” and describes the oddities of Chukovsky’s revisions; also examines the Russian translation of the line in the Russian subtitles for the film Dead Poets Society.]

Bernardini, Caterina. “Italian Yawps.” Rocznik Komparatystyczny / Comparative Yearbook 4 (2013), 299-303. [Examines six Italian translations of the “barbaric yawn” line from Section 52 of “Song of Myself,” from Luigi Gamberale’s 1923 translation through Alessandro Ceni’s 2012 translation of the 1855 Leaves of Grass, arguing that “there is in fact no untranslatable yawn: the expression is translated by using more common screams, cries, shrieks, shouts.”]

Bharat, Meenakshi. “The Barbaric Soul: Lost in Translation: A Comment on the Hindi Translation.” Rocznik Komparatystyczny / Comparative Yearbook 4 (2013), 339-343. [Suggests how “innate qualities” of Whitman’s writings are “Hindu in spirit”; goes on to examine Chandrabali Singh’s 2011 Hindi translation of Leaves of Grass, focusing on the “barbaric yawn” line in Section 52 of “Song of Myself,” and concludes that “this translation fails to achieve the grandness of the original spiritual enterprise.”]

Blake, Leo D. “The Champion’s Chair.” Conversations (Fall/Winter 2013-2014), 1-3. [Tells the story of “the former desk chair of the first great defender of Whitman’s reputation and poetry—Whitman’s close friend and champion, William Douglas O’Connor,” a chair that is now at the Whitman
Mickle Street House and a chair that is “perhaps one that O’Connor used in his contemplations of Whitman.”

Boorse, Michael J., ed. *Conversations* (Fall/Winter 2013-2014). [Newsletter of the Walt Whitman Association, Camden, NJ, with news of Whitman Association events; this issue contains the winning entries in the Association’s annual High School Poetry Contest, a chronology of Whitman’s wartime experiences, and one article, listed separately in this bibliography.]

Bradford, Adam. “The Collaborative Creation of a Death-Defying Cryptext: Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*.” In Mary De Jong and Paula Bernat Bennett, eds., *Sentimentalism in Nineteenth-Century America: Literary and Cultural Practices* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2013), 300-319. [Describes “how Whitman’s famous direct address—the radical ‘you’ that first marked his 1855 *Leaves of Grass*—grew out of the apostrophic styles of address that were commonly used in sentimental mourning poems,” including Whitman’s own early sentimental verse, and argues that it was “this radical use of the literary conventions of mourning [that] allowed Whitman to achieve an . . . intimate sense of ‘presence,’” both in his own day and after his death, merging poetic immortality with the immortality of the soul, and making himself as much a living a presence to today’s readers as he was in his own lifetime.]

Brenegan, Debra. *Shame the Devil*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2011. [Biographical novel of Sara Payson Willis (Fanny Fern), focusing on particular days in her life; Whitman is a recurring character and the focus of chapters 40 (“Walt Whitman, Brooklyn, Thursday, February 8th, 1855”), 43 (“Fanny Fern and Walt Whitman, New York, Friday, March 14th, 1856”), and 47 (“Walt Whitman, Brooklyn, Saturday, October 4th, 1856”).]


Damai, Puspa L. “Welcoming Strangers: Hospitality in American Literature and Culture.” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2012. [Examines “the question of hospitality in nineteenth- and twentieth-century American literary studies,” examining “multiple sites of hospitality” in Whitman and other writers; Chapter 1 defines Whitman’s “poetics of hospitality as containment” and investigates “how both Whitman and [Lydia] Sigourney relate hospitality not only to nation-building but also to its colonial and imperial contexts”; *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses* (DAI-A 74/02, August 2013).]
Davies, Catherine. *Whitman’s Queer Children: America’s Homosexual Epics.* London: Continuum, 2012. [Examines Hart Crane’s *The Bridge*, Allen Ginsberg’s “Howl” and *The Fall of America*, James Merrill’s *The Changing Light at Sandover*, and John Ashbery’s *Flow Chart*, as four American poems in the epic tradition that have a “Whitmanian lineage,” and argues for “the existence of a genealogy of American epic poems that renegotiate the conventions governing the relationship of the public and the private—a genealogy that I trace back to Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* and his radical suggestion, as Robert Creeley so eloquently notes, that ‘the common is personal’”; goes on to analyze how these poems demonstrate ways that “the discourses of the national and the sexual both offer a model for conceiving of one’s identity.”]

DeLong, Joe. “Excuses for Emotion.” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 2013. [Analyzes “representations of emotion in recent American poetry on the subject of parents and gay and lesbian icons”; Chapter 5, “The Promise of Whitman,” examines “the poetry of gay poets Allen Ginsberg, Richard Howard, Timothy Liu, and Mark Doty,” who “express attachment to Walt Whitman’s idealistic vision, even as they call it into question, especially insofar as it contrasts with the actual experiences of gay life”; *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses (DAI-A 75/02, August 2014).*]


Fabrizio, Ryan. “The Ecstatic Whitman: The Body and Sufistic Influences in *Leaves of Grass*.” M.A. Thesis, Florida Atlantic University, 2012. [Examines “Whitman’s use of the body in his poetry as a location for spiritual experience, and how his use of the body bears strong connection to its use by medieval Persian Sufi poets”; *Proquest Dissertations and Theses (MAI 51/01, February 2013).*]

for translators... to translate what Whitman names as ‘untranslatable’; introduces a group of eleven essays, each listed separately in this bibliography, investigating how translators from various languages deal with the phrase and the passage in which it appears.]


Gardner, M. C. Walt Whitman: The Mickle Street Vampire. Self published, 2010. [Reprints and offers commentary on each “Children of Adam” and “Calamus” poem, focusing on “their relationship to the conception of Bram Stoker’s celebrated signature character, Count Dracula”; extensive appendices include the correspondence between Whitman and Stoker, facsimiles and transcriptions of the “Live Oak with Moss” sequence, photographs of Whitman’s friends and associates, and assorted other materials.]

Gardner, M. C. Whitman’s Code: A New Bible. Volume 1: Song of Myself and the 24 Canticles. Los Angeles: Patcheny Press, 2013. [Reprints and offers commentary on all fifty-two sections of “Song of Myself” and twenty-four other poems from Leaves of Grass that exist outside of clusters, referred to here as “solo canticles”; seeks to solve the “exquisite puzzle” of Leaves of Grass by examining “Whitman’s ambitious plan to write a New Bible,” structured on the numbers 12, 24, 52, and 365, representing months in a year, hours in the day, weeks in a year, and days in a year, forming a “code” that the author claims to have cracked.]

Garzón Rogé, Mariana. “Expansión, elasticidad y reelaboración de un archivo como base de datos: Entrevista a Kenneth Price del Archivo Walt Whitman.” Red-historia 4 (September 2013), historiapolitica.com/redhistoria/2013/09/entrevista-price/. [Interview with Kenneth Price about the goals of the online Walt Whitman Archive (whitmanarchive.org), the ways that Whitman’s work lends itself to database collection, the ways that databases organize information, the users’ challenges in exploring literary databases, the nature of the inclusiveness or selectivity of literary databases, and the openendedness of the Whitman Archive project, which set out to “create a research environment, not just an edition”; in Spanish.]

Gunderson, Lauren. I and You. 2013. [Drama about a loner white teenage girl (Caroline) and her high school classmate, an African American basketball and saxophone player (Anthony), who work together in her bedroom on a school project on Whitman’s “Song of Myself”; world premiere at Marin Theatre Company, Mill Valley, California, October 2013.]


us Whitman in old age / Sat by a pond in nothing but his hat, / . . . / The meeting point where great art comes to pass— / Whitman, who danced and sang but never flew, / The moth, which had not written Leaves of Grass. . . .”

Kilgore, John Mac. “The Revival of Revolt: Enthusiasm and Event in U.S. Literature from the American Revolution to the Civil War.” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Davis, 2012. [Analyzes American “literatures of enthusiasm,” defined as works that grow out of “active dissent against existing political conditions of tyranny” and create “insurrectionary publics”; Chapter 5 views Whitman “not as the national bard of Unionism and integralism who speaks for all and heals the nation’s fragmentation, but as the bard of American civil war and international sectarianism who speaks in the name of the enthusiast for queer democracy”; ProQuest Dissertations and Theses (DAI-A 74/03, September 2013).]

Leffler-McCabe, Laura, and Tanner Curl. Leaves. 2010. [Musical drama, based on the poetry of Whitman, about a soldier returned from the war in Afghanistan and his extended family; premiered by Savage Umbrella theatre company in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 2010, and revived in an expanded form in November 2013 at the Playwrights’ Center in Minneapolis.]


Lerner, Ben. “The Dark Threw Patches Down Upon Me Also.” Lana Turner: A Journal of Poetry and Opinion 6 (2013), 202-212. [Poem responding to Whitman’s work in general and “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” in particular, beginning “It was not my intention to travel in time, / watch him distribute dried fruit and sweet / crackers to soldiers in hospital, small sums, / writing their letters, this was back when / you might take it to a cousin to be read / under a cut glass lamp.”]

Loving, Jerome. “With Walt Whitman in Camden, Durham, Leningrad, and Elsewhere.” Walt Whitman Quarterly Review 31 (Summer 2013), 31-42. [Offers an overview of Loving’s long career studying and writing about Whitman, including his visits to Gertrude Traubel’s home in Germantown and his friendships with Whitman collector Charles Feinberg and Whitman scholars Gay Wilson Allen, Roger Asselineau, and Clarence Gohdes.]
Price and Caterina Bernardini, Scholars of the Works of Whitman, the King of the Poets of Democracy]. *Etemad* [Tehran, Iran] (July 2, 2013). [Interview with Price and Bernardini about Whitman’s poetics, his relationship to democracy, and his influence on other poets; in Persian.]

Merton, Lee. “Asian American Poetry, American Poetry, and the Critique of Identity: Asian American Poetry in Comparative Context, 1887-2005.” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2012. [Offers a “critical evaluation of identity” by examining American poets who “seek to contest the reduction of a sense of the full multiplicity of personhood, that is, they defend a certain democratic understanding of self”; Chapter 1 “reads the work of Walt Whitman and Sadakichi Hartmann in the context of Chinese Exclusion” and argues that “both poets focus on the fragmentary and personal to object to a presumption that individuals can be known or totalized”; *Proquest Dissertations and Theses (DAI-A 75/01 (July 2014).]*

Moe, Aaron. M. “Toward Zoopoetics: Rethinking Whitman’s ‘Original Energy.’” *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 31 (Summer 2013), 1-17. [Examines how Whitman “discovered innovative breakthroughs in form through paying attention to the gestures and vocalizations of nonhuman animals,” and goes on to “explore the ‘original energy’ of Whitman’s zooapoetics, particularly in ‘A Noiseless Patient Spider,’” arguing that, “for Whitman, animal bodies reappear in some of his best poems, thereby animating the poetic micro-universe within alphabetic discourse,” and that “Whitman’s innovative forms arose, in part, through minding animals.”]


Neufeld, Zachery Daniel. “Voyage of the Soul.” M.A. Thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 2013. [A concert work for baritone, piano, and string quartet, with text derived from six of Whitman’s poems about “facing mortality and the idea of the immortality of the soul”; *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses (MAI 52/01, February 2014).]*

Noll, Bruce. *Notes to My Mortician*. Albuquerque, NM: Mercury HeartLink, 2014. [Poems; “Song of the Nail” (1) begins, “Whitman never put the song / of a nail in his poems but / I’m betting he made some sing.”]

Paro, Maria Clara. “Brazilian ‘Barbaric Yawps.’” Rocznik Komparatystyczny / Comparative Yearbook 4 (2013), 305-312. [Examines how, in Brazil, it was the French, Spanish, and Italian translations of Whitman that set the stage for Portuguese translations, and goes on to compare various Portuguese translations of Whitman’s “barbaric yawp” line from Section 52 of “Song of Myself,” showing how the “yawp” comes to be “shouts, howls, barks, or tinkles”; focuses especially on Geir Campos’s translation, which underwent surprising changes from 1964 to 1982.]


Pearcy, Andrew. “Walt Whitman’s Changing Perceptions of the Effects of the American Civil War and Its Impact on His Poetry.” Master’s Thesis, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, 2013. [Examines how Whitman’s “perceptions about the American Civil War changed in Drum-Taps” and traces this shift through the categories of “the autobiographical, the military, and the civilian”; ProQuest Dissertations and Theses (MAI 52/02, April 2014).]

Petterson, Anders. “Barbaric Yawp’ in Swedish.” Rocznik Komparatystyczny / Comparative Yearbook 4 (2013), 265-272. [Examines three Swedish translations of “Song of Myself”—by Karl Alfred Svensson (1935), Erik Lindegren (1946), and Rolf Aggestam (1983)—and focuses on how each translated the “barbaric yawp” line in Section 52 of “Song of Myself”; goes on to discuss the variety of possibilities in Swedish and offers a new translation of the line.]

Rosen, Rebecca J. “Walt Whitman Is Great at Twitter.” Atlantic (December 12, 2013), www.theatlantic.com. [About the Twitter handle “@Tweetsof-Grass,” which has been tweeting “Song of Myself” to 11,000 followers, one line at a time: “At a basic, mechanical level, one reason that Whitman works well on Twitter is the fact that most of Whitman’s lines fit into Twitter’s 140-character limit.”]

Scarry, Siobhan Lisa. “We: Intersubjectivity and Visions of Community in American Experimental Poetry (1850-1968).” Ph.D. Dissertation, State University of New York at Buffalo, 2013. [Examines the “persistent strain of poetic engagement with community” in nineteenth- and twentieth-century experimental American poetry; part of the dissertation analyzes how, for Whitman, “the desire to re-ground and re-envision the concept of community shapes [his poetry] at the level of grammar, ontology, and poetic voice”; ProQuest Dissertations and Theses (DAI-A 75/02, August 2014).]

Skwara, Marta. “‘Barbaric Yawp’ in Polish.” Rocznik Komparatystyczny / Comparative Yearbook 4 (2013), 328-334. [Compares and contrasts how three Polish translators—Ludmiła Marjańska (1966), Andrzej Szuba (1992), and Krzysztof Boczkowski (2003)—translate Whitman’s “barbaric yawp” line from Section 52 of “Song of Myself,” and examines ways the phrase was echoed and translated in Polish before the first full translation; concludes by discussing the line’s translation in the Polish version of the film Dead Poets Society.]

Steinroetter, Vanessa. “‘Barbaric Yawp’ in German.” Rocznik Komparatystyczny / Comparative Yearbook 4 (2013), 273-280. [Compares seven German translations of Whitman’s “barbaric yawp” line from Section 52 of “Song of Myself” (starting with Karl Knortz’s and Thomas Rolleston’s 1889 Grashalme and extending through Jürgen Bröcan’s 2009 Grasblätter) and also examines how other German writers translated the phrase when they used it in essays about Whitman.]


Tartici, Ayten. “‘Barbaric Yawp’ in Turkish.” Rocznik Komparatystyczny / Comparative Yearbook 4 (2013), 335-338. [Examines the paucity of translations of Whitman in Turkish and notes that the only Turkish translation of Whitman’s famous “barbaric yawp” line from Section 52 of Leaves of Grass was done for the subtitles of the film Dead Poets Society; goes on to examine this translation and to speculate on reasons for Whitman’s relative absence in the Turkish literary world.]

Vandenborre, Katia. “‘Barbaric Yawp’ in Dutch.” Rocznik Komparatystyczny / Comparative Yearbook 4 (2013), 281-286. [Compares and contrasts three Dutch translations of Whitman’s “barbaric yawp” line from Section 52 of “Song of Myself,” one translation by Maurits Wagenvoort (1898), one translation overseen by Jacob Groot and Kees’ Hart (2005), and one by Jakib Veenbaas (2007); argues that “in Dutch Whitman’s ‘barbaric yawp’ sounds obviously more melodious than a barbaric shrill scream.”]


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