Walt Whitman: A Current Bibliography, Summer/Fall 2014

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Ambrosino, Brandon. “Be Not Afraid of My Body.” *New York Times* (June 29, 2014), SR8. [Recalls a first encounter with Whitman’s works, when the author was in eleventh grade, “an evangelical Christian” just discovering he was gay, finding in Whitman “my Adamic other.”]

Bellot, Marc. “‘The true America, heir of the past so grand . . .’: Walt Whitman et l’épopée américaine.” *Cercles: Revue Pluidisciplinaire du Monde Anglophone* 23 (2012), 4-14. [Claims that Whitman’s combination of epic and free verse reconstructs a historical dialectic by juxtaposing archaic temporality with dynamic, future-minded rationality; provides an extended reading of “Song of the Exposition,” noting that the ironic distance in Whitman’s combination of epic tone and modern American progressivism displaces the heroes and battles of antiquity to introduce immigrant laborers, the American Revolution, and the Civil War to their ranks in the history of civilization; in French.]

Binlot, Ann. “Patti Smith, James Franco Join MoMA PS1 To Reopen Fort Tilden.” *Forbes* (July 3, 2014), forbes.com. [Reports on the reopening of Fort Tilden Park in Far Rockaway, with a June 29 celebration featuring actor James Franco and musician, artist, and poet Patti Smith, both reciting poems by Whitman before an audience of 2500; Smith also created a “new permanent art installation . . . called ‘Whitman Remembrance Stones,’ composed of rocks situated around the park inscribed with lines by Whitman.”]

Blum, Hester. “Melville and Whitman, Digitally Mediated.” *Leviathan* 16 (March 2014), 154-156. [Reports on the June 2013 “Melville and Whitman in Washington” conference in Washington, D.C., and focuses on how the conference “highlighted the tremendous (and standard-setting) digital scholarship on Whitman, and increasingly on Melville as well.”]

Buinicki, Martin. “The ‘need of means additional’: Walt Whitman’s Civil War Fundraising.” *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 31 (Spring 2014), 135-157. [Examines the history of fundraising for injured and sick soldiers in D.C.’s Civil War hospitals; raises important questions about Whitman’s affiliation with the U.S. Christian Commission; and examines how “in large part because of his brother Jeff’s advice, [Whitman's] abilities as a fundraiser improved significantly as the war continued” as he began “to learn the importance of direct solicitation and social networks in large-scale fundraising.”]

Cailler, Bernadette. “Interfaces: Walt Whitman et Édouard Glissant.” *Francofonia* 63 (2012), 75-91. [Refers to Martinician author Glissant’s *The Poetics of Relation* and *The Philosophy of Relation* to identify “Relation” as a concept linking Whitman’s and Glissant’s writings in a discontinuous fashion, regardless of genre distinctions; proposes the term “interfaces”
to allow for the similarities as well as the differences between “Relation” in the works of both authors; compares and contrasts Glissant’s texts with *Democratic Vistas* and *Leaves of Grass* via three overlapping “interfaces”: “the Self and the Sacred”; “National Literature, Language(s), Earth, and Culture”; “Relation, Ethics, and Diversity”; in French.

Cooley, Crisman. “Recorded Lines from ‘America’: A New Poetic Analysis.” *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 31 (Spring 2014), 163-168. [Analyzes the wax cylinder recording of the first four lines of Whitman’s poem “America” (the voice is attributed to Whitman himself), focusing on “three characteristics of sound evident in the recorded voice: duration, pitch, and dynamics,” and offers “a musical transcription of the recording,” all to demonstrate that “the recording is a masterful performance, read with authority, drama, and remarkable musical consistency.”]


Folsom, Ed. “Erasing Race: The Lost Black Presence in Whitman’s Manuscripts.” In Ivy G. Wilson, ed., *Whitman Noir: Black America and the Good Gray Poet* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2014), 3-31. [Explores the “spectral black presence” that “both haunts and energizes Whitman’s work” as a result of the way that Whitman “systematically erased race from his published writings,” and reads a number of Whitman’s works—including “The Sleepers,” “Song of Myself,” “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d,” “Reconciliation,” *Memoranda during the War*, and *Democratic Vistas*—as examples of how “crossing race” generated Whitman’s writing even as racial origins were expunged in the published versions.]

Folsom, Ed. “‘That towering bulge of pure white’: Whitman, Melville, the Capitol Dome, and Black America.” *Leviathan* 16 (March 2014), 87-120. [Examines Whitman’s and Herman Melville’s experiences with and writings about the U.S. Capitol dome during its construction, and suggests a “forgotten aspect” of the history of the dome—the way the statue of Freedom and, in a sense, the Capitol dome itself, was racially tinged and how Whitman and Melville would have experienced it that way”; concludes that “by the end of the war, Whitman and Melville were, oddly, more in line with Jefferson Davis’s original conception of what that ‘towering bulge of pure white,’ so tenuously balanced between the Southern and Northern wings of the Capitol, would represent—a joining of Northern and Southern whites, a confirmation of the freedom for those who already had it—than they were with the possibilities many in the culture were beginning to see in the figure of a manumitted slave on the apex of the nation’s newly completed Capitol, summoning the United States to rethink itself in the dawning light of emancipation.”]

Ford, Mark. *Six Children*. London: Faber and Faber, 2011. [Includes (p. 12) the title poem, “Six Children,” opening with an epigraph from Whitman (“Though unmarried I have had six children”) and imagining his fathering of six children with various women; the poem is also included in Ford's *Selected Poems* (Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 2014).]

Frank, Robert. “Walt Whitman Book Sells for $305,000.” *CNBC* (June 19, 2014), cnbc.com. [Reports on a June 18, 2014, Christie’s sale of a first edition of *Leaves of Grass* for $305,000, “more than twice Christie’s estimate” and “a world auction record for Whitman”; the “previous record” for a first edition of *Leaves* was $230,500 at a Sotheby’s auction in October 2011.]

Freeburg, Christopher. “Walt Whitman, James Weldon Johnson, and the Violent Paradox of US Progress.” In Ivy G. Wilson, ed., *Whitman Noir: Black America and the Good Gray Poet* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2014), 82-103. [Argues that “it is actually the centrality of race to Whitman’s strident commitment to US progress and national unity in postbellum America that encourages us to see connections between him and black writers such as James Weldon Johnson, whose work reflected the nation’s turbulent uncertainty, violence, and need for progressive social transformation,” and emphasizes “Whitman’s and Johnson’s shared focus on the idealistic fulfillment of US democracy, social equality, and the centrality of race to it, even if their approaches appear to contradict one another,” with Whitman ignoring postwar violence to black bodies while “black writers focused on the types of graphic bodies that never made it into Whitman’s work”; concludes that “Whitman and Johnson both saw race as a pressing concern, but Whitman, with a privileged sense of distance, felt comfortable enough to wait on the spirit of history, while Johnson saw history running over blacks.”]

Gautier, Amina. “The ‘Creole’ Episode: Slavery and Temperance in *Franklin Evans*.” In Ivy G. Wilson, ed., *Whitman Noir: Black America and the Good Gray Poet* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2014), 32-53. [Examines in detail the section of *Franklin Evans* in which Evans visits a Southern slave plantation, an episode that “introduces and integrates Evans into the culture of slavery, thus complicating the ways in which the narrative’s conflation of slavery and intemperance is fully realized,” and argues that “unlike most temperance narratives that simply reiterate the presumed connective similarities between slavery and intemperance, Whitman explores the metaphoric juncture of the two,” even while drawing a contrast between Evans (“the figurative slave”) and the Creole woman Margaret (“the slave in fact”) and showing “that Evans is ultimately capable of gaining a self-mastery unavailable to Margaret” by, ironically, becoming “not only one who is enslaved but also one who is capable of enslaving another.”]

Gerhardt, Christine. *A Place for Humility: Whitman, Dickinson, and the Natural World*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2014. [Observes that “Dickinson and Whitman developed their environmentally suggestive poetics at roughly the same historical moment, a time when a major shift occurred in
their culture’s general view of the natural world,” and goes on to examine “Dickinson’s and Whitman’s poetry in conjunction with this important change in environmental perception,” exploring “the links between their poetic projects in the context of nineteenth-century environmental thought,” and arguing that these poets’ “interlocking involvement with their culture’s growing environmental sensibilities constitutes an important connection between their disparate bodies of work,” revealing “that both explore a position in regard to the earth that the late twentieth century would term environmental humility,” ranging from these poets’ “persistent attention to the smallest natural phenomena” to their engagement with “local lands” to their “regional imagination” and finally to their “global awareness.”

Gosline, Sheldon Lee. “‘I am a fool’: Dr. Henry Cattell’s Private Confession about What Happened to Whitman’s Brain.” *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 31 (Spring 2014), 158-162. [Offers definitive evidence from Henry Cattell's private diary that Cattell was responsible for destroying Whitman’s brain, which had been removed by Cattell at the poet’s autopsy for deposit in the collection of the American Anthropometric Society: “I left Walt Whitman's brain spoil by not having the jar properly covered.”]

Grant, David. *Political Antislavery Discourse and American Literature of the 1850s*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2012. [Chapter 7, “Fall Behind Me, States!”: Reexamining the Politics of Union in *Leaves of Grass* (185-220), investigates how “Whitman employed the political antislavery strategy of identifying the apostasy of the North as a central engine for advancing the power of slavery,” and how the “Messenger Leaves” cluster in the 1860 *Leaves* “lays out the requirement that the North establish a new system of defiance and self-reliance” to reverse the North’s “embrace of the debasement that comes from compromising away freedom’s principles,” as Whitman in 1860 “dramatizes both the final fruits of Union-saving degradation and the remedy to that problem,” a remedy that puts “the language of individualism” in “the service of a collective project” and imagines “a Northern self, both individual and collective, that would stake its own self-perpetuation on its ability to maintain personal and political independence in the present moment,” “thereby join[ing] Republican discourse in constructing the ‘architects’ of the future who will prove themselves worthy of that role by contouring their action to the demands of a symbolic history that presupposes and depends on them.”]

Grässer, Jürgen. “Walt Whitman: der amerikanische Dichter überhaupt” [“Walt Whitman: the American Poet”]. *Fränkischer Tag* [Bamberg, Germany] (July 25, 2014), 35. [Reports on the 2014 Transatlantic Walt Whitman Seminar, held at the University of Bamberg in July, and interviews guest professor Ed Folsom; in German.]

Hellmann, Melissa. “Songs of Ourselves: An Attorney Sings Walt Whitman Poems to Chronicle the History of Queer Community.” *SFWeekly* (June 25, 2014), sfweekly.com. [Reports on San Francisco baritone Daniel Redman’s singing performances of Whitman’s poetry, set to music inspired by the “ecstatic Jewish music customarily sung in the context of prayer or Shabbat.”]
Hutchinson, George B. “Afterword: At Whitman’s Grave.” In Ivy G. Wilson, ed., Whitman Noir: Black America and the Good Gray Poet (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2014), 179-185. [Reflects on a 1987 visit to Whitman’s Camden, New Jersey, home, where an African American woman, Eleanor Ray, was the caretaker and guide, and recalls a visit on the same trip to Whitman’s grave in Camden’s Harleigh Cemetery.]


Martin, Justin. Rebel Souls: Walt Whitman and America’s First Bohemians. Boston: Da Capo, 2014. [Popular history of Whitman’s years at Pfaff’s beer cellar, examining the artists’ circle that hung out there and the impact of the place and its habitués on Whitman’s work, seeking “to provide fresh context for Whitman’s life and career.”]

Nickels, Thom. “Walt Whitman and Pennsylvania’s Ascent into the Impossible.” Huffington Post (May 29, 2014), huffingtonpost.com. [Meditates on how “the impossible happened a couple of weeks ago when marriage for same sex couples became legal in the state of Pennsylvania” and finds “my thoughts turned to poet Walt Whitman”; goes on to recall a 1980s visit to Whitman’s house in Camden, New Jersey, where the tour guide angrily denied that Whitman was a homosexual, and speculates that “if Whitman were alive and well today there’s little doubt that he would have been one of the first in line at Philadelphia City Hall to apply for a marriage license.”]

Pfeifer, Martina. “Melvilleans and Whitmanians in Washington, DC.” Leviathan 16 (March 2014), 157-159. [Reports on the June 2013 “Melville and Whitman in Washington” conference at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., summarizing the conference and ancillary events, and musing about “how Whitman and Melville might have felt had they been sitting among the many ‘Melvilleans,’ ‘Whitmanians,’ and ‘Friends of Whitman,’ each approaching their texts from our own perspectives.”]

Phillips, Rowan Ricardo. “Whitman: Year One.” In Ivy G. Wilson, ed.,
Whitman Noir: Black America and the Good Gray Poet (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2014), 172-177. [Reflects on how the author “admired and then grew skeptical” of Whitman’s ideas (“America, democracy, capacious love, instructive death”) and how, later, via Lorca’s “Ode to Walt Whitman,” he “met another Walt Whitman; a Whitman that brought me back to Whitman.”]

Pöhlmann, Sascha. “Walt Whitman’s unfertige Stadt: Washington, D.C. als Anfangsort” [“Walt Whitman’s Unfinished City: Washington, D.C., as Starting Place”]. In Maha El Hissy and Sascha Pöhlmann, eds., Gründungsorte der Moderne: Von St. Petersburg bis Occupy Wall Street [Foundation Places of Modernity: From St. Petersburg to Occupy Wall Street] (Paderborn, Germany: Wilhelm Fink, 2014), 117-143. [Focuses on a “hitherto neglected” aspect of Whitman’s work, his engagement with Washington D.C. as an “Anfangsort” (a place of beginning), arguing (with reference to Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s embodied phenomenology of place) that Whitman created Washington D.C. as a poetical place of “repeated and repeatable beginnings” that oscillates between “flexibility and permanent symbolic subscription”; argues that Whitman’s Washington D.C. shifts from a Civil War city of sacrificial wounds and national healing towards a symbolically unfinished place represented mainly through its architecture and especially its capitol building; concludes that Whitman’s Washington D.C. is an “Anfangsort of Democracy” that “explodes the framework of the nation”; in German.]

Preston, Rohan. “In ‘Leaves of Grass—Uncut,’ Patrick Scully Pays Tribute to Walt Whitman.” Minneapolis Star Tribune (July 3, 2014). [About “Twin Cities dance, choreographer and performance impresario Patrick Scully” and his “multidisciplinary show that is at once a Whitman stage biography and tribute that’s also about his own growth”; opened in July 2014 “as part of Fresh Ink, a new-works series at Illusion Theater in Minneapolis.”]

Price, Kenneth M. “Walt Whitman and Civil War Washington.” Leviathan 16 (March 2014), 121-134. [Examines how “the crisis of war remade both Whitman and Washington, DC,” and analyzes the effects of the quickly changing capital city on the poet during the last two war years, showing how Whitman came “to admire both the wounded soldiers and the city now hosting them,” while he focused his attention on “the war experiences of the common soldier, the stoicism and heroism of otherwise average individuals, and—above all—the suffering, dignity, and enormous courage he saw in his hospital visits.”]


Sandler, Matt. “Kindred Darkness: Whitman in New Orleans.” In Ivy G. Wilson, ed., *Whitman Noir: Black America and the Good Gray Poet* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2014), 54-81. [Offers a re-evaluation of Whitman’s 1848 experience in New Orleans (a place that “produced both freedom and slavery simultaneously”) “in terms of its local black culture” and argues that “the ‘Creole’ and ‘Africanized’ cultures of New Orleans informed Whitman’s poetics,” as is especially evident in “I Sing the Body Electric” and “The Sleepers”; argues that “Whitman saw the city’s famed Mardi Gras festivities and engaged, in some way, with New Orleans voudou,” and concludes that, “through New Orleans’s stylized performances of mixed faith and ‘liberated’ sexuality, African slaves transformed into African Americans and provided strange possibilities for what would become Whitman’s poetics of ‘merging.’”]

Son, Hyesook. “Homosexuality and Utopia: A Reading of Whitman’s Calamus.” *Journal of English Language and Literature* [Korea] 58, no. 1 (2012), 43-67. [Sets out to illustrate “Whitman’s homosexual vision of utopia with a close reading of his representative homosexual text, Calamus,” arguing that “his ideal of America is not a deferred wish for the future, but a concrete vision that can be achieved here and now, realized by the spontaneous bonding and instant attraction among free men”; goes on to indicate that “Whitman has inspired many later poets, showing a possibility of infusing homosexual identity into a radical imaging of the nation and its future”; in Korean.]


Tuggle, Lindsay. “The Haunting of Unburial: Mourning the Unknown in Whitman’s America.” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Sydney, 2010. [Examines the shrinking distinction between the corpse as object of mourning and subject of scientific inquiry throughout the nineteenth century, and argues that *Leaves of Grass* occupies a culturally significant place within this threshold, tracing lines of intersection across botanical, anatomical, and sentimental modes of relation to the human body, before and after death; seeks to establish Whitman’s role in evolving cultural understandings of the corpse as an object of posthumous discovery and desire.]

Building at the Columbian Exposition” (43-74), examines how architect Louis Sullivan “embodied his Transcendentalist architectural theories and Walt Whitman’s concept of democracy in the Chicago Auditorium Theater,” tracing Sullivan’s interest in Whitman, his 1887 “fan letter” to Whitman, and his own “Whitmanian prose poem” called “Inspiration”; and Chapter 5, “Wright and Whitman: Taliesien West, Arizona” (123-150), focuses on architect Frank Lloyd Wright’s “interpretation of Whitmanian democracy in Taliesien West” and examines Wright’s notes on the “Chants Democratic” section of Leaves of Grass, suggesting how he “gained architectural hints from the book.”]


Wilkenfeld, Jacob. “Transforming the Kosmos: Yusef Komunyakaa Musing on Walt Whitman.” In Ivy G. Wilson, ed., Whitman Noir: Black America and the Good Gray Poet (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2014), 124-148. [Explores “Komunyakaa’s connection to the good gray poet; argues that “Whitman’s work is a key reference in Komunyakaa’s oeuvre”; examines Komunyakaa’s many references to Whitman in interviews and essays; offers an extended reading of Komunyakaa’s poem “Kosmos” and briefer readings of three other poems; and concludes by proposing that Komunyakaa offers “new ways to look at the Whitmanian kosmos from the alternate poetic universe of his own imagination.”]


Wilson, Ivy G. “Postwar America, Again.” In Ivy G. Wilson, ed., Whitman Noir: Black America and the Good Gray Poet (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2014), 104-123. [Examines “Whitman as a central figure in the making of [Ralph] Ellison as a postwar writer and critic, with particular emphasis on the immediate aftermath of World War II,” focusing on “the affinities as well as the divergences of their thoughts on language and cul-
ture” and on “what Ellison’s engagement with Whitman divulges about the politics of his own cultural project, a project that could not yet announce ‘America’ and ‘democracy’ as convertible terms”; concludes by considering Whitman in relation to both Ellison and C. L. R. James, proposing that “Ellison and James alike could hear in Whitman’s language his position on black Americans,” but for James “Whitman’s multiplicity of individualism might only yield the simulacrum of democracy and a feigned equality,” while “Ellison put currency in Whitman’s speculation that a ‘grand American opera’ might come from the voices of blacks.”]

Wilson, Ivy G., ed. *Whitman Noir: Black America and the Good Gray Poet.* Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2014. [Contains eight new essays and two reprinted essays, each listed separately in this bibliography; with an introduction, “Looking with a Queer Smile: Walt Whitman’s Gaze and Black America” (vii-xix), and an annotated “Selected Bibliography” (189-198), both by Wilson.]


Zettsu, Tomoyuki. “Poetry in Motion.” *Leviathan* 16 (March 2014), 164-166. [Reports on the June 2013 “Melville and Whitman in Washington” conference in Washington, D.C., and notes how, “as Melville was placed beside arguably the greatest American poet, Melville scholars had the opportunity to learn from and work with Whitman scholars, who in turn found a fresh interest in Melville’s poetry.”]

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