Walt Whitman: A Current Bibliography, Summer 2016

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Bellis, Peter. “Reconciliation as Sequel and Supplement.” *Leviathan* 17 (October 2015), 79-93. [Begins with the question, “Why does *Drum-Taps* require a sequel, and *Battle-Pieces* a supplement?” and goes on to note how Whitman and Herman Melville “could simply have ended their books with the close of Civil War hostilities,” but both felt “something more” was needed “to give the war shape and meaning: an additional movement toward reunification and reconciliation,” though both supplements brought “formal disruption” as “reconciliation is deferred or displaced into a separate section of the text and marked by an all too visible scar or seam”; goes on to demonstrate how “the break in Whitman’s text marks the point between wartime conflict and postwar reconciliation, a necessary pivot in what he comes to see as a single temporal and psychological process,” while for Melville, “reconciliation is blocked by the politicized struggle of Reconstruction, a discursive shift that leaves the volume not so much temporally incomplete as structurally flawed” (“Whitman sees reconciliation as a task that poetry can still accomplish, given time; Melville fears that it may lie beyond the reach of discourse altogether”); concludes by observing that, “nearly 150 years later, it is all too clear that Melville, not Whitman, was the more prescient, for the tasks of reconciliation and reunification still remain”; also published in *Mickle Street Review* (Spring 2016).]

Bevilacqua, Winifred Farrant. “‘Great or small, you furnish your parts toward the soul’: Walt Whitman’s ‘Crossing Brooklyn Ferry.’” *Philosophy and Literature* 39 (September 2015), A142-A155. [Uses Mikhail Bakhtin’s “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity” to offer a reading of “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” as a “process of authoring” that concludes with the speaker proclaiming “that, in harmonious interaction with our imaginative and spiritual faculties, elements of the physical world help us continue our ‘crossing’ toward a superior realm, which is also our journey toward full participation in a state of enduring spirituality.”]

Blalock, Stephanie, and Jennifer Masada. “Creating Open Access to Scholarship on Whitman.” *Bindings* (Spring/Summer 2016), 8-10. [Reports on the transformation of the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* into an open-access online journal, and on the journal’s much-heralded publication of Whitman’s recently discovered “Manly Health and Training.”]
Bootle, Samuel Douglas. “The Body Poetic: Laforgue’s Translations of Whitman.” Dix-Neuf 20 (February 2016), 25-44. [Explores Jules Laforgue’s 1886 translations of Whitman’s poems and their relation to Laforgue’s overall work, with a focus on how both poets give “a prominent role to embodiment,” though “there are significant disparities between their representations of bodily experience” that result from “their disparate conceptions of their roles as poet,” with Whitman “inherently political” (and thus portraying “vigorously healthy bodies” since he sees a “metaphorical equivalence between body, text, and nation”) and Laforgue rejecting a “political role” and focusing “his attention on the suffering of the individual body” in poetry “riddled with illness and weakness.”]


Cojoca, Ecaterina. “Ode to Lady Liberty: (Re)Imagining American Identity in Walt Whitman’s Patriotic Poems.” In Iulian Boldea, ed., Globalization and Intercultural Dialogue: Multidisciplinary Perspectives (Targu-Mures, Romania: Arhipelag XXI Press, 2014), 727-735. [Argues that Whitman’s “notion of American identity” changed shape over his writing career, moving from “adhesive and generous” to “convulsed, turbulent and willful” after the Civil War, as he began portraying Democracy in “various female images: mother, lover, and even temptress,” assuming “the role of literary nurturer of the democratic individuality of America.”]
Elliott, Clare Frances. “A Poetic Presidency: Abraham Lincoln, Walt Whitman, and the Second American Revolution.” In Michael Patrick Cullinane and Clare Frances Elliott, eds., Perspectives on Presidential Leadership: An International View of the White House (New York: Routledge, 2014), 41-56. [Reviews the relationship between Whitman and Lincoln, Whitman’s attitudes toward Lincoln, and the ways that “Lincoln and Whitman similarly felt that the Civil War was something of an extension of the American Revolution, an attempt to finally put right the affronts to democracy that had existed post-1776,” and reads “The Centenarian’s Story” in this light; concludes that, “although the two men never met, the interest each had in the other testifies to how closely tied politics and poetry were in nineteenth-century America.”]

Elliott, Clare Frances. “William Blake’s American Legacy: Transcendentalism and Visionary Poetics in Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman.” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Glasgow, 2009. [Traces the reading of Blake’s work by Transcendentalists beginning with Emerson’s reading of “Songs of Innocence and Experience” in 1842, and argues that Algernon Charles Swinburne in Britain and John Swinton in the U.S. both initiated in 1868 a discussion of “the similarities between Blake’s and Whitman’s poetry,” a discussion that quickly faded; proposes that “by reading Blake, Emerson and Whitman together, new readings of each of them can profitably be made” that reveal the American writers’ “visionary qualities—like those found in Blake’s prophetic works”; Proquest Dissertations and Theses Global (DAI-C 71/01).]

Ferreira, Carla Sofia. “Seeing through French Eyes: Vers Libre in Whitman, Laforgue, and Eliot.” Cambridge Quarterly 45 (March 2016), 20-41. [Examines Whitman’s distinction between “Frenchness” and “Frenchiness” (the one admirable, the other disparaging) and considers his response to the news that Jules Laforgue was translating his poetry into French; tracks the complicated relationship between Whitman and Laforgue, and between Laforgue and T. S. Eliot, arguing that “the poetry of Whitman, Laforgue, and Eliot in transit and translation reveals a history of free verse not yet fully told,” and concluding that “Whitman may remain in the shadow of Eliot’s poetry, but his words did indicate the future: without his poems, we would not have had the Laforgue of Derniers vers, and without Derniers vers we likely would have had a very different Waste Land and a very different Eliot”: “Eliot’s meaning in French or English is incomplete without also looking at Whitman.”]


Fountain, Ben. “American Exceptionalism: The Great Game and the Noble Way.” *The Guardian* (April 9, 2016). [Uses the opening of the American major-league baseball season as an occasion to explore “American exceptionalism,” arguing that “America is complicated,” that “American history is not clean,” and that “American exceptionalism is a volatile political substance, with as much potential for doing good as wreaking havoc”; quotes Whitman frequently about both baseball and American exceptionalism, especially “Lincoln’s exceptionalism”—“a self-doubting, self-examining exceptionalism.”]

Freund, Wieland. “Das beste Workout für die Manneswurzel.” *Die Welt* (May 1, 2016). [Reports on Zachary Turpin’s discovery of Whitman’s 1858 journalistic series, “Manly Health and Training,” published in 1858 in the New York *Atlas*, and reprinted, with Turpin’s critical introduction, in the Spring 2016 issue of the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*; the story was reported in many other newspapers, magazines, and online publications; in German.]

Fröhlich, Soren. “Blood of a Nation: Politics, Medicine, and Race in U.S. Literature, 1848-1900.” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 2016. [Argues that “U.S. authors’ writing about human blood (both metaphorical and literal blood) changed during the second half of the nineteenth century” as they “superimposed medical blood tropes on Romantic metaphors,” creating “new fictions about blood”; Chapter 3 proposes that Whitman “focused his collection *Drum-Taps* (1865) on the absorption of blood and hospital practice to reconcile the blood of the Civil War with his national vision”; *Proquest Dissertations and Theses Global* (DAI-A 77/10).]
Frost, Mark. “A Disciple of Whitman and Ruskin: William Harrison Riley, Transatlantic Celebrity, and the Perils of Working-Class Fandom.” *Critical Survey* 27 no. 3 (2015), 63-81. [Examines “working-class intellectual” William Harrison Riley (1835-1907; a Christian Socialist, member of John Ruskin’s Utopian Guild, and manager of the communitarian St. George’s Farm) and his failed attempts to “act as a transatlantic bridge” between Ruskin and Whitman in order “to synthesize US and British radicalism,” demonstrating how even “generational prophets with broad appeal to the working classes” could succumb to “the hierarchical structures underpinning celebrity culture” (since Riley “suffered exclusion and privation as a result of his interactions with Ruskin”); proposes that Riley, who lived at different times in both Britain and the U.S., “should be recognized as a significant figure amongst British Whitmanites,” even as his “attempts to experience more than a ‘brush with fame’ and to achieve a profound connection with his heroes were a fascinating but ultimately futile challenge to a dynamics of celebrity construction that reflected the widening social stratification of nineteenth-century capitalism.”]


Gray, Nicole, and Kenneth M. Price. “The Letters in the Litter: Messy Boundaries and Other Conundrums in Editing Walt Whitman’s Correspondence.” *Scholarly Editing* 37 (2016), scholarlyediting.org. [Discusses the challenges of organizing and categorizing Whitman’s correspondence for the online *Walt Whitman Archive*, noting the imprecision of genre categories for many of Whitman’s documents: “it is crucial as we impose orderliness to also honor messiness, not just because that is how Whitman left—and lived in—his personal archive, but also because his writings seem designed to make a mess of boundaries, smudging any clear lines we . . . might wish to impose by separating documents based on genre or era”; examines how “the *Whitman Archive* is moving toward an editorial approach that embraces the potential for multiple forms of categorization and display, a structure that allows objects to be both letter and litter, and many other things besides.”]


texts—“Among the Multitude,” “That Shadow My Likeness,” and “To a Stranger”—for mezzo-soprano, oboe, cello, and harp; performed in New York City by The Secret Opera in April 2016, sung by Caitlin McKechney.

Halliday, Sam. “Electricity and Homosexuality: From 19th-Century American Sexual Health Literature to D. H. Lawrence.” Centaurus 57 (August 2015), 212-228. [Sets out “to demonstrate the important role played by electricity in theorizations of sexuality advanced in 19th- and early-20th-century American sexual health literature, and in poetry and fiction with which the former is conceptually aligned,” and argues “that via Whitman, Lawrence was exposed to a version of American sexual health theorizing in a kind of surrogate, transmuted form” (as is evident in a draft of the Whitman chapter, unpublished during Lawrence’s lifetime, of Studies in Classic American Literature); goes on to examine how Whitman’s “conception of same-sex desire as both virtuous and healthy is . . . articulated under the sign of an electrical conception of sex.”]

Hix, Lisa. “Walt Whitman—Patriotic Poet, Gay Iconoclast, or Shrewd Marketing Ploy?” Collectors Weekly (May 3, 2016), collectorsweekly.com. [Provides an extended review of Whitman’s publishing career, including each of the editions of Leaves of Grass, and interviews Whitman collector Ed Centeno, who has gathered “every piece of Whitman memorabilia he could get his hands on—from commemorative stamps and cancellations to Whitman-branded bubblegum and digital downloads of TV clips mentioning Whitman,” a collection now numbering around 2000 objects; offers an extensive overview of the marketing of Whitman and Whitman-associated products from the poet’s own lifetime to the present.]


Izzi, Matt. “Walt Whitman Rest Stop.” Shenandoah 63 (Fall 2013), shenandoahliterary.org. [“Flash fiction” about riding a bus that stops at the Walt Whitman rest stop in New Jersey, and thinking about Whitman while observing today’s America.]
Jones, Josh. “Walt Whitman’s Unearthed Health Manual, ‘Manly Health & Training,’ Urges Readers to Stand (Don’t Sit!) and Eat Plenty of Meat (1858).” *Open Culture* (May 2, 2016), openculture.com. [Reports on Zachary Turpin’s discovery of Whitman’s 1858 journalistic series, “Manly Health and Training,” published in 1858 in the New York *Atlas*, and reprinted, with Turpin’s critical introduction, in the Spring 2016 issue of the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*; the story was reported in many other newspapers, magazines, and online publications.]


Largen, Kristin Johnston. “Thoughts on Death, Oliver Sacks, Mary Oliver, and Walt Whitman.” *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 54 (December 2015), 314-316. [Finds comfort in various writings about death, including Whitman’s “On the Beach at Night Alone.”]

Lerner, Ben. *The Hatred of Poetry.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016. [One section focuses on Whitman, arguing that “Whitman can’t take sides” and that his open-endedness and desire to “inhabit all” make his poetry unclaimable for political uses.]


Martin, Travis. “‘All Things Swim and Glimmer’: Pragmatic Conceptions of Self and ‘The Old Lie’ in Thomas Wentworth Higginson’s ‘A Night in the Water.’” *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 50 (2014), 247-255. [Examines Higginson’s “A Night in the Water,” which narrates his Civil War swim across a channel to a shore controlled by Confederates, and considers the “manliness” he discovers in himself at that moment in relation to his later attacks on Whitman’s lack of manliness, suggesting that “Higginson’s rivalry with—and apparent insecurity in relation to—Whitman still emerges decades after the events in the story, . . . suggest[ing] that the masculine project of ‘A Night in the Water’ was ultimately unsustainable.”]

Turpin’s discovery of Whitman’s 1858 journalistic series, “Manly Health and Training,” published in 1858 in the New York *Atlas*, and reprinted, with Turpin’s critical introduction, in the Spring 2016 issue of the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*; the story was reported in many other newspapers, magazines, and online publications.]

McWilliams, James E. “Meet the Texas Scholar Who Unearthed Walt Whitman’s 19th Century Clickbait.” *Texas Observer* (July 20, 2016), texasobserver.org. [Describes how Zachary Turbin discovered the previously unknown Whitman journalistic series, “Manly Health and Training,” and interviews Turpin about its significance.]

Miller, David Richard. “The Problem of the City: Urban Anxieties in Twentieth-Century British and American Poetics.” Ph.D. Dissertation, Manchester Metropolitan University (U.K.), 2013. [Examines the “concept of urban anxieties” and “the roots of the problem of the city in both romantic and modernist writers”; Chapter 3 looks at Charles Olson’s *Maximus Poems* and juxtaposes Olson’s “root city” with Whitman’s New York; *Proquest Dissertations and Theses Global* (DAI-C 74/10).]

Miller, Matt. “Getting the Joke in ‘Of Being Numerous’: George Oppen as Heir to Walt Whitman’s Public Poetics.” *Resources for American Literary Study* 37 (2014), 153-180. [Argues that “Whitman was central to Oppen’s poetics and to his most celebrated poem, ‘Of Being Numerous’” (the conclusion to which Oppen described as “partly a joke on Whitman”); uses archival materials and interviews to give “a comprehensive overview of Oppen’s engagement with Whitman”; proposes that Oppen’s view of Whitman was unique, departing both from the dismissive views of the early modernists and the enthusiastic views of Oppen’s contemporaries in the 1950s and 1960s; and offers a detailed reading of Whitman’s presence in (and explains the “joke on Whitman” at the end of) “Of Being Numerous.”]

Cougar [University of Houston] (May 9, 2016). [Reports on Zachary Turpin’s discovery of Whitman’s 1858 journalistic series, “Manly Health and Training,” published in 1858 in the New York Atlas, and reprinted, with Turpin’s critical introduction, in the Spring 2016 issue of the Walt Whitman Quarterly Review; the story was reported in many other newspapers, magazines, and online publications.]


Osterman, Dan, and Nick Thokelson. Dreambook. 2016. [“A play with music,” taking place in 1848 New Orleans, with Whitman, future filibuster William Walker, African-French daguerreotypist Jules Lion, and Lion’s teenage ward Anna as the main characters; premiered June 2016 at Boston Playwrights’ Theatre, directed by Jaime Carrillo.]

Parsons, Amy. “Desire, Forgetting, and the Future: Walt Whitman’s Civil War.” Arizona Quarterly 71 (Autumn 2015), 85-109. [Asks how “issues of desire, trauma, and memory [were] understood before psychoanalysis,” and argues “that Walt Whitman’s war writing in Specimen Days and Drum-Taps offers an alternative landscape for the psyche, one quite distinct from the psychoanalytic emphasis interiority, privacy, and the priority of the past over the present,” instead finding a “solution to the devastation of the war . . . grounded in idiosyncratic notions of desire and forgetting,” as he “responds to the overwhelming physical destruction of bodies with a desirous, affectionate care for them,” providing a “solace” that is “entirely directed toward having been wounded rather than wounding, dying rather than killing”; proposes that Whitman’s “specific demand for forgetting at the end of Specimen Days . . . offers atonement for killing, an atonement elaborated in the poems of Drum-Taps,” where “forgetting becomes the condition for national renewal—in the space that Whitman’s forgetting opens at the end of Specimen Days, loving, physical contact between men creates in Drum-Taps a new, compensatory future, one that is erotic, affective, and reproductive in a way that is not familial and private, but rather civic and multiple, able to replace the countless futures destroyed through wartime acts of killing.”]

a notion of the future enables Whitman to base a democratic politics on nature, and his poetry works to actively construct futurity itself—not a particular future but rather a space of potential—so as to imagine a utopian political space that has an impact on the present as well, and which is cultivated in the precarious balance between the extremes of uncertainty and determinacy”; goes on to discuss “Whitman’s notion of futurity, nature and politics in general” and to offer a detailed reading of “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” as “an exemplary poem of this kind of utopian performativity that envisions a transtemporal democracy” by “manag[ing] to fold the future onto the present in such a way as to make the former truly a presence,” and by “insist[ing] on the necessity of thinking politically beyond the present, and . . . forc[ing] us to expand our notion of democracy into the future.”]


Price, Kenneth M., and Jacqueline M. Budell. “‘Written by Walt Whitman, a friend’: Three Letters from Soldiers.” *Prologue Magazine* 48 (Summer 2016), 36-45. [Examines the three known cases of Whitman’s writing letters for Civil War soldiers and considers “the implications of Whitman’s effort to ventriloquize” these soldiers and “his attempt to channel the thoughts, anguish, and love of ordinary people in an extraordinary time”; goes on to provide information about Robert Nelson Jabo, Albion F. Hubbard, and David Ferguson, the soldiers for whom Whitman wrote these letters.]


Schöberlein, Stefan. “Tapping the Wire: A Telegraphic Discourse.” *American Literature* 88 (June 2016), 269-300. [Examines late nineteenth-century texts about the telegraph, tracking the changing discourse about the invention, from “euphoria” to “gothic gloom”; examines Whitman’s “Poem of Salutation,” finding there a “cosmic embrace of the whole of worldwide telegraphic communication” as his “senses fuse with the technologies of the time.”]

Scholnick, Robert J. “Whigs and Democrats, the Past and the Future: The Political Emerson and Whitman’s 1855 Preface.” *American Periodicals* 26 (2016), 70-91. [Examines the “two leading parties of antebellum America, the Democrats and Whigs” and explains how the Whigs were “the party that drew from the past to give order, structure, and purpose to American life,” while “the Democrats insisted that America must be understood as a product of the very future that the nation was creating”; goes on to show “how the poetics of Whitman’s 1855 preface,” “with its freewheeling, boundary-breaking prose style,” is “based on the ideology and politics of the antebellum Democrats.”]


Shvets, Anna. “The Verbal Gesture as Possibility for the Direct Transcription of Experience.” *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie* no. 135 (2015), 37-42. [Argues that, in “Song of Myself,” Whitman employs a “signifying strategy which makes possible the rendering of a directly inaccessible and inexpressible experience,” accomplished by creating a “flow” in his verse that “imitates bodily movement, namely, a verbal gesture”; he thus addresses his dilemma of trying to create “a poem that cannot be put in words because it precedes verbal expression”; in Russian.]

Siles Gonzalez, José. “Walt Whitman, Poesía y Cuidados” [“Walt Whitman, Poetry and Care”]. *Cultura de los Cuidados* 19 no. 43 (2015), 12-18. [Investigates the influence on Whitman’s work of his service as a Civil War caregiver and examines the “sociopoetics of care” (“la sociopoética de los cuidados”); in Spanish.]

Sten, Christopher, and Tyler Hoffman. “Herman Melville and Walt Whitman Write the Civil War.” *Leviathan* 17 (October 2015), 1-6. [Discusses the relative status of Whitman’s *Drum-Taps* and Melville’s *Battle-Pieces*, and introduces “the essays gathered in this special issue of *Leviathan* [which] constitute a representative sampling of the most illuminating contemporary assessments of Melville’s Civil War poetry.”]

Sweda, Michael. *Dialogues with Walt Whitman for the New American Millenium: A New Song of These United States*. Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2016. [Poems growing out of the author’s dream of Whitman, in the future, walking by his side in Washington, DC, and presenting to the author “the dream of the gleaming futuristic city, Capitol to the Nation and world.”]

Vice, Brad. “Henry Miller: The Literature of Culture Shock and Reverse Culture Shock.” In Marcel Arbeit and Roman Trusnik, eds., *A View from Elsewhere* (Palacky, Czech Republic: Palacky University, 2014), 29-46. [Explores Whitman’s (and other writers’) influence on Henry Miller’s early work, arguing that the influence shifts “depending on which stage of culture shock [Miller] is describing.”]


Ward, David C. “Two Worlds of Mourning: Walt Whitman and Abraham Lincoln’s Death.” *PN Review* 41 (July/August 2015), 9-10. [Contrasts “O Captain!” and “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d,” noting that both poems—the first a “fine piece of Victorian sentimentality,” the second a “radically new work”—omit “the war itself as an historical event,” refashioning “the war or the assassination into an aesthetic presentation of
war’s consequences, . . . either swaddled in pieties that indicate a kind of emotional incomprehension” or becoming “the jumping-off point for an incipient modernism, one that leaves the war and the past behind.”]


Unsigned. “Walt Whitman Advocated the Paleo Diet.” *Metro India News* (May 1, 2016). [Reports on Zachary Turpin’s discovery of Whitman’s 1858 journalistic series, “Manly Health and Training,” published in 1858 in the New York *Atlas*, and reprinted, with Turpin’s critical introduction, in the Spring 2016 issue of the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*; the story was reported in many other newspapers, magazines, and online publications.]

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