Walt Whitman Quarterly Review
http://ir.uiowa.edu/wwqr

Walt Whitman: A Current Bibliography

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Volume 18, Number 1 (Summer 2000) pps. 93-99

SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE:
Discoveries

Stable URL: http://ir.uiowa.edu/wwqr/vol18/iss1/13
ISSN 0737-0679

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WALT WHITMAN: A CURRENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Amato, Joe. "No Wasted Words: Whitman’s Original Energy." Nineteenth Century Studies 12 (1998), 37-63. [Argues that Whitman’s poems, especially “This Compost” and “A Song of the Rolling Earth,” are founded on the principle of language as “a source of a renewable creative energy” and are usefully read in the context of “scientific theories of energy conservation that emerged during mid-century,” theories which led Whitman to “hope that language might provide a natural, energy-laden resource for the renewal of vital social-democratic processes.”]


Benton, Paul. "Whitman, Christ, and the Crystal Palace Police: A Manuscript Source Restored." Walt Whitman Quarterly Review 17 (Spring 2000), 147-165. [Investigates the anecdote about Whitman being watched by the police at the 1853 Crystal Palace Exhibition, an anecdote that William Douglas O’Connor wrote out but then cancelled in a manuscript about Whitman that he prepared for Moncure Conway; argues that the anecdote is significant in what it reveals about Whitman’s attitude toward and relationship with policemen, as well as what it reveals about the possible origins of Leaves of Grass in Whitman’s reactions to Bertel Thorvaldsen’s statues of “Christ and His Apostles,” which were on display at the Crystal Palace.]


Cavanagh, Clare. “Whitman, Mayakovsky, and the Body Politic.” In Stephanie Sandler, ed., *Rereading Russian Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 202-222. [Examines Whitman’s influence on Russian poet Vladimir Mayakovsky, comparing their very different “poetic bodies” and investigating why “Mayakovsky should feel compelled to fill Whitman’s mythical hat and boots as he worked to commandeer his place as the premier ‘poet of the coming democracy.’”]

Cherkovski, Neeli. *Whitman’s Wild Children: Portraits of Twelve Poets*. South Royalton, VT: Steerforth Press, 1999. [Expanded edition of the book originally published in 1988; with a new introduction, “Whitman: The Genius of the Modern” (x-xxv), about how “Whitman didn’t throw a pebble into the literary pond; he pushed a boulder over the cliff,” about how he served as “a fire source” for “the gay movement of mid-twentieth century America,” about how “Leaves of Grass was a disembarkation from the past,” and about how Whitman is a “revolutionary of the word.”]

Demumieux, Christiane. *Un goût de sauvage: essai*. Avernes-sous-Exmes, Orne: Association le Moulin Bazalgette, 2000. [In this book about Léon Bazalgette (1873-1929), the French biographer and translator of Whitman and Thoreau, Whitman is often discussed, especially in the sections “Walt Whitman: bouscule l’esthétisme français” (27-30) and “Sauvage” (81-87); in French.]


Garman, Bryan K. “‘Heroic Spiritual Grandfather’: Whitman, Sexuality, and the American Left, 1890-1940.” *American Quarterly* 52 (March 2000), 90-126. [Investigates Leftist followers and admirers of Whitman, including Horace Traubel, Mike Gold, and Woody Guthrie, and examines how Whitman “compelled them to promulgate an eroticized male solidarity that
subordinated women in both the capitalist present and the imagined socialist future; argues that Whitman’s “adhesiveness” was adopted by Leftists to shore up their agenda of strengthening solidarity among white male workers while excluding females and nonwhite males from “the Left’s idealized democracy.”

Garman, Bryan K. A Race of Singers: Whitman’s Working-Class Hero from Guthrie to Springsteen. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000. [Tracks Whitman’s dream of a “race of singers” and “examines the making of an explicit working-class hero, the process by which cultural workers, predominantly nationally recognized white men with leftist leanings, have consciously invoked and evoked specific Whitmanesque ideals to engage class politics”; focuses on early socialist followers of Whitman like Horace Traubel and Mike Gold, then follows the tradition through singers like Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan, and Bruce Springsteen; Whitman is the focus of Chapter 1, “For the Workingman’s Sake: Imagining a Working-Class Hero” (17-42), and Chapter 2, “Heroic Spiritual Grandfather: Whitman and the Anticapitalist Imagination, 1890-1940” (43-78, published earlier in American Quarterly as “Heroic Spiritual Grandfather: Whitman, Sexuality, and the American Left, 1890-1940”).]


Hallock, John W. M. The American Byron: Homosexuality and the Fall of Fitz-Greene Halleck. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000. [Chapter 6, “Halleck and His Friend” (151-174), traces Halleck’s relationship with Whitman (especially through their mutual friend Bayard Taylor) and their similar fondnesses for “urban life, foreign eroticism, and the arts,” concluding that “Whitman might never have been able to envision his homosexual theology without the previous work of Halleck and others,” although, “unlike Whitman, Halleck rejected his own homosexual idealism and saw his effort to advance American society as a complete failure.”]

Hardwig, Bill. “Walt Whitman and the Epic Tradition: Political and Poetical Voices in ‘Song of Myself.’” Walt Whitman Quarterly Review 17 (Spring 2000), 166-188. [Reads the 1855 version of “Song of Myself” in relation to “Whitman’s manipulation” of the Virgilian “epic voice,” arguing that Whitman both imitates and overturns epic conventions—“destabilize[s] some of the ideological certainty of the epics”—to demonstrate his radical Democratic rejection of the conservative Whig political agenda.]


Merrill, Stuart. *The White Tomb: Selected Writings.* Ed. Edward Foster. Jersey City, NJ: Talisman House, 1999. [Gathers writings by Merrill (1863-1915), an American expatriate writer in French and English, part of the avant-garde at the turn of the century, who promoted Whitman as a model for French poetry; included is "Walt Whitman (à Léon Bazalgette)," translated by "Aeon" (157-160), Merrill's account of his meeting with Whitman "four or five years before his death" after his 1887 Lincoln lecture (earlier published privately by Henry S. Saunders [1922] and in the *Walt Whitman Newsletter* 3 [1957]); "Guillaume and Walt" (174-176), a translation of Guillaume Apollinaire's 1913 account in *Mercure de France* of Whitman's funeral, where "pederasts had turned out en masse"; also prints a translation of Apollinaire's "apology" and his request that readers "dismiss the anecdote" (177); and prints Merrill's letter to *Mercure de France* expressing "astonishment" at Apollinaire's account and assuring readers that Whitman's funeral was "a perfectly dignified, solemn, and respectable occasion" (178-180); the translations are by Anselm Hollo.]


Nicholson, Karen, ed. “Conversations” (Winter/Spring 2000). [Biannual newsletter of the Walt Whitman Association, with news of WWA events; this issue contains an article about the installation—in the Children’s Garden of the New Jersey State Aquarium in Camden—of John J. Giannotti’s sculpture of “Whitman with Butterfly,” and a note about the installation of more than thirty new “Welcome to Camden County” signs “featuring a rendering of Whitman based on the sculpture.”]


Parks, Steve. “The Challenge of Getting a Read on Whitman.” *Newsday* (March 24, 2000), B31. [Describes Richard Gambino’s new play about Whitman, “Camerado,” which received a staged reading by the Peconic Theater Company at the Westhampton Beach Performing Arts Center on March 24-26, 2000.]


Schmidgall, Gary. “Marching with Walt Whitman.” *Advocate* (April 30, 2000), 62-63. [Questions how Whitman would have responded to the U.S. “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy on gays in the military, and concludes that “he would have ridiculed it, for sure.”]


combinatory space for speaker and audience, a space that involves the orator in ‘great toil’ and well as ‘extasy’—where “the power of language” can “effect social change.”


Whitman, Walt. *Walt Whitman’s A Backward Glance Over Travel’d Roads*. Santa Barbara: Bandanna Books, 1996. [Reprints “A Backward Glance O’er Travel’d Roads,” as “modernized” by Sasha Newborn, who has “modernized Whitman’s spelling, and replaced unintentional sexist usages by gender-neutral terms”; with a glossary of names and terms following the text.]


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“*Walt Whitman: A Current Bibliography,*” reformatted as an annual bibliography, is available online at http://www.uiowa.edu/~wwgr/. Annual bibliographies of Whitman scholarship from 1975 to the present are accessible and searchable at this site.