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Walt Whitman: A Current Bibliography

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WALT WHITMAN: A CURRENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aplin, Beth C. “Walt Whitman Comes Alive, Thanks to Theatre Lab for Emerging Artists.” Brooklyn Daily Eagle (April 24, 2007). [About a multimedia stage production of “Walt Whitman: Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” by the Brooklyn-based Brave New World Repertory Theater, performed at the BRIC studio in Brooklyn, featuring “lyrical musical numbers, lively choreography, powerful raps, historic props and more”; conceived, directed, and produced by Claire Beckman, with Ezra Barnes starring as Whitman.]

Baker, David. Midwest Eclogue. New York: Norton, 2005. [“Primer of Words” (31-35) is a poem about Whitman’s 1880 trip to Canada: “Hard to picture him here in the lake grass / taking notes, up to his knees in mud, bugs. . . .”]


Bloom, Harold. How to Read and Why. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000. [“Walt Whitman” (88-94) offers suggestions for reading Whitman’s work, arguing that “Whitman at his best and most characteristic is a difficult poet, hermetic and elitist,” and proposing that “we need to read Whitman for the shock of new perspectives that he affords us, but also because he still prophesies the unresolved enigmas of the American consciousness.”]

Boorse, Michael J., ed. Conversations (Spring/Summer 2007). [Newsletter of the Walt Whitman Association, Camden, New Jersey, with reports of association activities and one essay, noted separately in this bibliography.]


Burgland, Michael Howard. “Songs of Desire and the Self: Opera in the Work of Walt Whitman, Henry James, Willa Cather, and Gertrude Stein.” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Tulsa, 2006. [Chapter Two “examines Walt Whitman’s obsession with opera and how it influenced his notions of democratic space and desire in America”; DAI-A 67 (May 2007).]

Cavitch, Max. American Elegy: The Poetry of Mourning from the Puritans to Whitman. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006. [Chapter Six, “Retrievements out of the Night: Whitman and the Future of Elegy” (233-285), offers an extended reading of “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d,” placing it firmly in an American elegiac tradition, arguing that it is “the story of a secret culture of desire,” and tracking the ways that Whitman “wants to be open to the dissonance of loss and to be prepared for the creative possibilities it affords,” including “the staggering pathos of erotic liberation that the elegiac tradition has made available to us through aesthetic experience”; the afterword, “Objects” (286-291), suggests how “generations of elegists have continued more or less uncertainly to work through, in their various relations to Whitman, both the fascination and the burdensomeness of the past as a libidinal terrain.”]

Earnhart, Brady. “The Good Gray Poet and the Quaker Oats Man: Speaker as Spokescharacter in Leaves of Grass.” Walt Whitman Quarterly Review 24 (Spring 2007), 179-200. [Looks at how Whitman “invest[ed] Leaves of Grass with a human identity” and “offered the act of reading the mass-produced book as a corrective to the social disintegration that mass production itself had helped bring about”; goes on to examine the book in the context of “early modern advertising,” arguing that “communing with ‘Walt Whitman,’ drinking milk with Elsie the cow, and eating bologna that has a first and a last name are acts that spring partly from a common set of cultural circumstances” surrounding the early development of advertising, and proposing that Whitman’s “immersion in the rapidly growing advertising industry was a key factor in his learning the importance and some of the methods of making a mass-produced commodity feel like a close friend”; concludes that “Whitman’s iconoclastic mix of poetry and advertising epitomizes his struggle to reconcile his visions of proletarian utopia and industrial capitalism.”]

Folsom, Ed. “Speechless but not without words.” Iowa City Press-Citizen (April 29, 2007), 11A. [Memorial for the killings at Virginia Tech University, evoking Whitman’s responses to the Civil War dead and his “When
Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d” to suggest how poetry can “provide words for our grief, words to make our grief articulate.”]


Gilmore, Perry, and Ray McDermott. “‘And This Is How You Shall Ask’: Linguistics, Anthropology, and Education in the Work of David Smith.” Anthropology and Education Quarterly 37 (June 2006), 199-211. [Testimonial essay about David Smith, former president of the Council on Anthropology and Education; one section of the essay, “Walt Whitman’s Advice” (205-207), examines Smith’s life in relationship to Whitman’s instructions in the 1855 Preface (“Despise riches . . .”).]


Handley, George B. New World Poetics: Nature and the Adamic Imagination of Whitman, Neruda, and Walcott. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007. [Explores the environmental history of the Americas and posits a transnational poetics based on Whitman’s, Pablo Neruda’s, and Derek Walcott’s search to “recuperate the New World’s lost histories”; Chapter Three, “Reading Whitman in the New World” (68-106), offers “the story of Whitman’s influence in the hemisphere, including an overview of his specific impact on José Martí and on Neruda and Walcott,” with a focus on how these writers are concerned with “the dynamics of a changing, evolving natural world”; Chapter Four, “Nature’s Last Chemistry” (107-156), offers an ecocritical reading of Whitman, examining “his bipolarity as a poet, which led, on the one hand, to a Hegelian poetics of imperial expansion and sweeping generalizations and, on the other, to the liberating potential of a democratic...
poetics of the local and the particular,” all leading to his relevance to “the broader poetic traditions of the hemisphere.”]


Hutchinson, Coleman. “Revision, Reunion, and the American Civil War Text.” Ph.D. Dissertation, Northwestern University, 2006. [Examines “the relations between textual revision and social change,” offering “a theory of the cultural work of textual revision” in the Civil War period; one chapter considers revisions made to Whitman’s texts and tracks “the processes of complex social change” that are evident “in the sometimes subtle differences among revised versions of texts”; DAI-A 67 (February 2007), 2985.]

Ifill, Matthew L. “‘The Lands to be Welded Together’: Commemorating Fifty Years of the Walt Whitman Bridge.” Conversations (Spring/Summer 2007), 1-5. [Commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of the Walt Whitman Bridge, connecting Philadelphia and New Jersey over the Delaware River, and reviews the controversy about naming the bridge in Whitman’s honor; examines Whitman’s love of river crossings in relation to the bridge.]


Kopley, Emily. “Mark Twain’s Birthday Letter to Walt Whitman.” Yale University Library Gazette 81 (October 2006), 43-56. [Offers a transcription and photo facsimile of the manuscript of Mark Twain’s 1889 letter to Whitman on the poet’s seventieth birthday, and explicates the letter in the context of Twain’s other writings around the same time, questioning the “religious language” of the letter and seeing it as “somewhat earnest and somewhat mocking”; goes on to track the mysterious provenance of the letter.]

Krieg, Joann P. “Whitman and Modern Dance.” Walt Whitman Quarterly Review 24 (Spring 2007), 208-216. [Recounts the history of the creation and performance of choreographer Helen Tamiris’s Walt Whitman Suite, a dance created in 1936 for the Federal Dance Project and based on “Salut au Monde,” “Song of the Open Road,” and “I Sing the Body Electric”; proposes that Tamiris is “a translator of Whitman’s words into the new language of modern dance.”]


Kuusisto, Stephen. “Walt Whitman’s *Specimen Days* and the Discovery of the Disability Memoir.” *Prose Studies* 27 (April 2005), 155-162. [Proposes that, with the writing of *Specimen Days*, “Walt Whitman is the progenitor of the ‘disability memoir’” and that “his discovery of lyric prose, first as a hospice nurse, and then as a man experiencing paralysis, represents the creation of a wholly conscious rendering of altered physicality in prose,” a prose written “in paralytic bursts” that “leads him away from his early figurative representations of the muscular democratic body.”]

Mazur, Krystyna. *Poetry and Repetition: Walt Whitman, Wallace Stevens, John Ashbery*. New York: Routledge, 2005. [Chapter Two, “‘thinking with and’; Whitman’s Repetitions and the Thought of the Multiple” (37-72), argues that “repetition in Whitman’s hands is a particularly powerful tool for affirming the all-embracing and a-categorical nature of his utopian vision” and “is used to represent plurality, to stage a polyphony and to engage other voices.”]


O’Meara, Stephen James. “Poetry in Motion.” *Astronomy* 35 (April 2007), 14-15. [Offers an astronomical explanation for the movement of the planet Venus in Whitman’s “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d,” noting the power of Whitman’s lines “in transforming the two-dimensional sky into three dimensions,” illustrating how “motion is one of the principal clues used by our visual sense to fathom distance”; tracks the positions of the moon and Venus in the sky from the time of Lincoln’s assassination to his interment.]


Potts, Jason. “The Legitimation of Inequality: The Rise of Culture and the Making of Character in American Literature, 1870-1915.” Ph.D. Dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 2007. [Examines “the many ways in which America tried to reconcile its commitment to individualism with the fact of economic inequality”; the first chapter looks “at how culture—specifically literature—was positioned as the remedy for the class tensions that Walt Whitman and others identified as the primary threat to the American nation”; DAI-A 67 (May 2007).]


Rubin, Joan Shelley. Songs of Ourselves: The Uses of Poetry in America. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007. [Chapter 1, “Seer and Sage” (19-24), looks at “poetry’s social uses in the United States” and examines how “the figures of the poet that confronted American readers in the era of Emerson and Whitman encapsulated the broader tensions between individualism and community, self-expression and civic obligation, that marked the nation as a whole.”]


Taylor, Kate. “Walt Whitman and The New York Sun.” New York Sun (August 29, 2007). [Reports that “Whitman scholars believe” Whitman “was the author of an article that appeared in The New York Sun on December 1, 1842, that plugged ‘Franklin Evans,’ advising: ‘It would not be amiss for every youth, whether he be of city or of country, to read this book’”; goes on to note that scholars have identified “about 10 articles” from the Sun in 1842-1843 written by Whitman.]


Van Steenburgh, David R. Finding the Metaphor: A Guide for the Beginning Poet in the Post-Modern Global World. Rockville, MD: Seaboard Press, 2007. [Chapter Eight (39-53) reprints and discusses Whitman’s “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry,” encouraging the “fledgling poet” to “find the metaphor to unlock our own thoughts and feelings” as “you go to Whitman’s poems to learn about yourself, not about Whitman”; Chapter 18 (117-121) returns to Whitman, claiming that “we know more about Walt Whitman, the person, than about any other Poet who ever lived because he has told us so, personally, in his writing.”]

Veneciano, Jorge Daniel. “Just Pleasure: The Subject of Cultural Democracy in Walt Whitman and José Martí.” Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 2006. [Examines “the formation of the democratic subject in the poetic and critical writings” of Whitman and Martí, arguing that “a critical, ethical attitude interrupts the Romantic aesthetic underlying the formation of Whitman and Martí’s democratic subject,” and that this interruption is the basis for what keeps their work “vital and enduring”; DAI-A 67 (April 2007).]


Whitley, Edward. “Whitman’s Occasional Nationalism: A ‘Broadway Pageant’ and the Space of Public Poetry.” Nineteenth-Century Literature 60 (March 2006), 451-480. [Examines and explicates “A Broadway Pageant” as an occasional poem that “demonstrates how the requirements of occasional poetry force Whitman to articulate the local and global framework within which his otherwise nationalist poetics operates,” force him “to view the nation through a specific, smaller-than-national space,” lead him to explore “the fracture lines in national identity on an occasion when the people he considered to be eminently representative of U.S. nationality were denied the status of national representatives,” and lead him “to recognize the mechanisms that allow him to come into contact with the world around him.”]

2007. [Reprints the original 1842 New World publication of Whitman’s novel, with an introduction (ix-lxii) and bibliography (145-147) by Castiglia and Hendler, along with Whitman’s “The Madman” (117-121) and “The Child and the Profligate” (123-133), as well as “An Address Delivered by Abraham Lincoln before the Springfield Washington Temperance Society” in 1842 (135-143).]

Unsigned. “Ode to Labor: Whitman Celebrated the Nobility of Work.” Worcester [Massachusetts] Telegram & Gazette News (September 3, 2007). [Editorial quoting passages of “A Song for Occupations” and claiming that “few thinkers of the day embraced and promoted” the ideals of “the nobility of work” “more fervently than the poet Walt Whitman.”]


Unsigned. “The Transatlantic Walt Whitman Association.” Walt Whitman Quarterly Review 24 (Spring 2007), 239-240. [Announces the formation of a Transatlantic Walt Whitman Association and prints the group’s charter.]

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