DAVID GRANT

"The Disenthralled Hosts of Freedom"

Party Prophecy in the Antebellum Editions of *Leaves of Grass*

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Iowa Whitman Series

Ed Folsom, series editor

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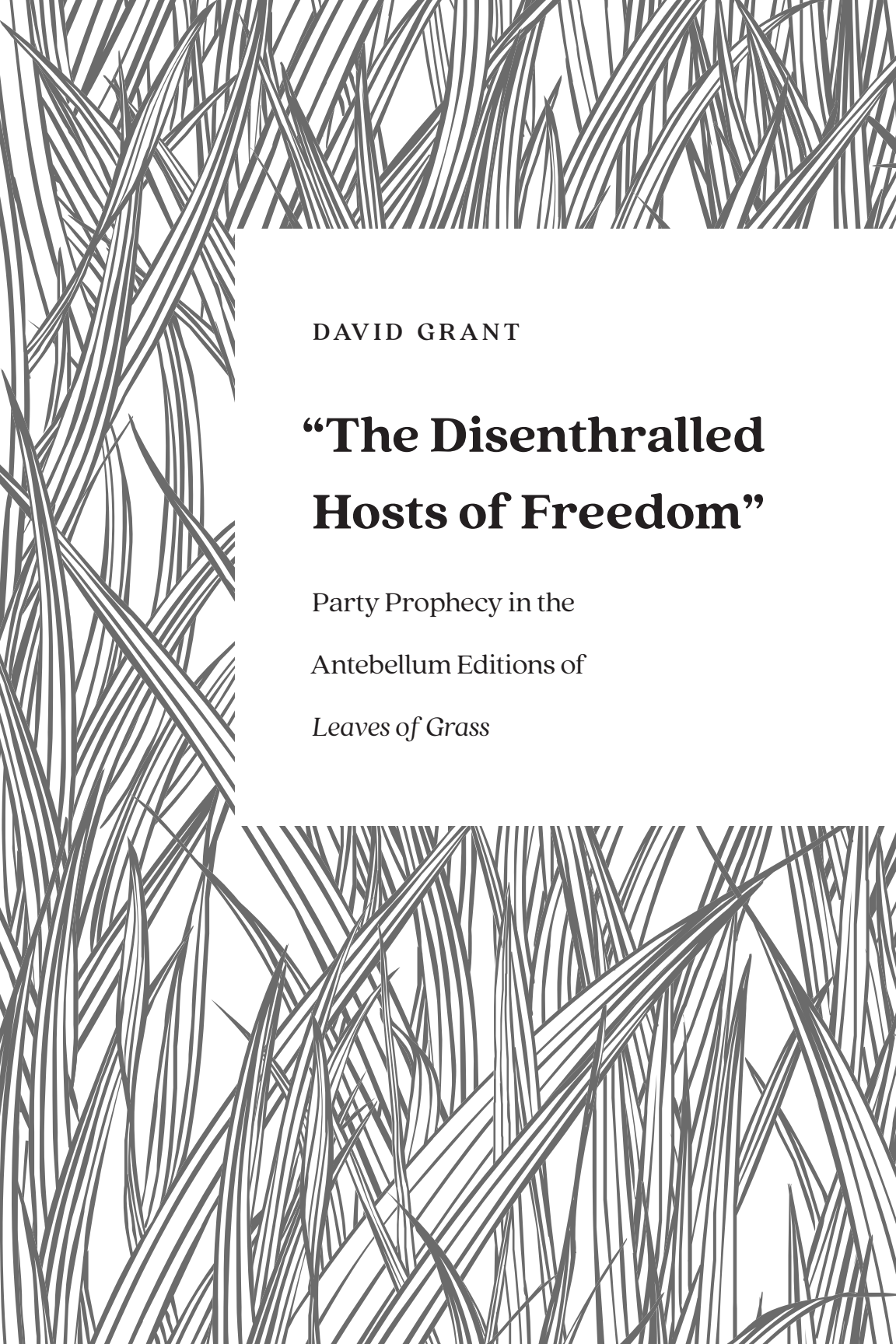

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This book is dedicated with

love to its foundation and

source, my late husband,

James Eric Hoch

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CHAPTER ONE

How the National Bard Could Be a Partisan Hack

The Party Antipartyism of *The Eighteenth Presidency!*

Interpretations of the three prewar editions of *Leaves of Grass* have inevitably been informed by the controversies over slavery and the Union that preoccupied the nation in those years. Partly for that reason, the critical tradition of treating those editions as entirely distinct from postwar editions is rich and diverse. Yet it has always seemed less fitting to place those three editions in the specific context of party discourse—even antislavery party discourse. Release from party has come to be seen as a stage in Whitman's development into an original poet and thinker. The strongest narrative of Whitman's political maturation, offered by Martin Klammer, presents the fledgling poet liberating himself from the rhetorical constraints of his Free Soil commitment in the 1840s to develop his own distinctive voice.[1] In the overlap between that perceived pattern of development and the widely held critical belief that Whitman had become more conciliatory to the South by decade's end,[2] the poet's affiliations with the new dominant antislavery party, the Republicans, have been obscured. Quite apart from policy positions, however, a more impenetrable barrier seems to have blocked critics from fully appreciating Whitman's participation in the Republican project—the simple fact that it was a party project. What could be more alien to Whitman's innovative productions than the narrow, routine, factional, time-bound, hedge-betting, self-interested, and manipulative appeals of a political party?

One answer to that question can be found in twenty-first-century studies of Whitman's relationship to the disputes of the second party system—

between Whigs and Democrats. Both Bill Hardwig and Robert J. Scholnick show that Whitman's debt to that rhetorical system did not touch upon the daily machinations of political competition but rather tapped the fundamental prophetic appeal of those two parties, which ran so deep in the culture that it could appear independently of any visible partisanship.[3] Undoubtedly the surest route of access to the importance of party in Whitman's poetry, their approach seems at first glance less suitable for the beginning of the third party system in the 1850s, when, for the first time, an antislavery party became one of the two chief competitors. Whereas the policy disputes in the second party system seem in retrospect relatively trivial ("tariffs and dead banks, / And scarecrow pontiffs," as Whittier dismissively described them after the fact[4]), thereby permitting later observers to train their gaze more deeply on the two parties' undergirding historical vision, the third party system dealt with the most substantive dispute ever to face the American electorate: whether the federal government should offer the kind of support to the institution of slavery that would promote its long-term survival. Most studies, therefore, consider Whitman's views on slavery independently of party, the better to tease out their strange blend of hesitancy and resolve, of revolutionary universality and constraining prejudice. This approach has the advantage of showing where Whitman stood within a wider debate beyond the confines of party discourse, but at the same time it hides some of the debts he owes to that discourse. Proposed here is an approach to antislavery parties that does what Hardwig and Scholnick, along with others, have done with the Democrats and Whigs: treat them as at once the medium and the source for a prophetic apparatus that relies less on specific policy positions than on the coherent rhetorical system employed to support those positions. Viewed from that perspective, Whitman's affiliations with antislavery parties come into sharp relief.

Still, when it comes to a party's rhetorical system, its incessantly reiterated formulas and guarded conventionality would seem to rule out any family resemblance to Whitman's poetic innovations. To be sure, Whitman's contributions were not direct; they were not an attempt to translate a political party's rhetoric into verse (for one thing, in the mid-nineteenth century much of that rhetoric was already in verse). Rather, they sought to appropriate some of the common tropes, maneuvers, and representations of American party discourse, developed primarily in the previous party system, to make them more amenable to the aims of political antislavery. The cultural project of

Leaves of Grass, in this sense, ran parallel with the struggles of the Free Soil and Republican parties themselves to channel antislavery principles into the already formalized and restricted terms of American party discourse—but from the other direction. Whereas the parties had to take the tropes and conventions as they found them and intermesh them with their political appeal and principles, Whitman was free to abstract them from their source in the campaign contests and hence insinuate their new implications more fundamentally into the national imaginary. The degree to which critics have already wrestled with the possibility that *Leaves of Grass* undertakes that cultural project is best illustrated in the reception history of the most party-bound work in all of Whitman's oeuvre.

Any examination of how *Leaves of Grass* relates to party discourse must contend with the one text that is explicitly a political tract: the unpublished manuscript of 1856, *The Eighteenth Presidency!*[5] That manuscript was completed as the crisis that grew out of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and subsequent violence in Kansas came to a head in the first presidential campaign to involve the new Republican party, recently formed in the North in response to that crisis. Is the political choice facing the nation that year merely the occasion for Whitman to anatomize the dangers that faced the republic and threatened the ideal he was working out in his poetry? Or, on the other hand, does the tract primarily adhere to the particular terms of debate defined by an unusually weighty political contest that year? It would be reasonable to assume that the answer falls somewhere in between those two extremes: Whitman joins, as if slumming, a discursive system that doesn't hinder him from developing a distinctive diagnosis—one that comes to full fruition in later editions of *Leaves of Grass* and in such prose works as *Democratic Vistas*. That middle ground, however, is not opened up by the text of the tract itself.

In its style, *The Eighteenth Presidency!* is Whitmanesque; however, in its assertions, in its argument, in its metaphoric system, and in its overall approach to its subject matter, it is, in fact, pure Republican boilerplate. Scarcely a single sentence within it (a sentence contrasting Italian with American craftiness may be the sole exception) does not reverberate with the claims and the rhetorical maneuvers that the political revolution—sparked by the crisis

over Kansas—had at last placed at the center of party discourse. Nothing similar could be said about any parts of *Leaves of Grass*, even some short political poems in the 1860 edition. That difference could suggest, then, that *The Eighteenth Presidency!* is merely a minor polemical work that sheds little light on anything other than Whitman's party affiliation at the moment. Yet there has been a critical tradition of taking the tract differently, of viewing it as an idiosyncratic intervention into the national debate that anticipates Whitman's developing visionary project throughout the decade. Betsy Erkkila, for instance, believes that the poems of the 1856 edition "translate the political jeremiad of *The Eighteenth Presidency!* into a kind of secularized sermon."[6] Accepting Erkkila's premise that the tract should contribute to our understanding of *Leaves of Grass* itself, the approach offered here views that contribution as residing precisely in its being Republican discourse.

An inclination to approach *The Eighteenth Presidency!* less as a particular mode of discourse than as a record of Whitman's own fine-tuned position on national matters has been reinforced by the tract's denunciation of party. The tract's charge that political parties have become both the instrument and the source of many of the national ills it diagnoses seems to promise a cure that is independent of those offered by any one of the nation's competing factions. In order to arrive at the crux of that problem—how the denunciations of party can be reconciled to the tract's affiliation with a certain variety of party discourse—one must first trace the critical tradition of distinguishing the tract from the genre to which it belongs.

Critical understanding of how we should situate the tract in the range of responses on the national crisis has progressed over the last seventy years. The 1950s was the decade when the conservatism of the tract was overstated on stark grounds—that the Republican party was closer to abolitionism than Whitman was himself. The party's views were too radical and divisive for Whitman's more inclusive national vision. For both the biographer Gay Wilson Allen and the editor of the discovered manuscript itself, Edward F. Grier, the ostensible independence of the tract from any party reflects Whitman's reluctance to go as far as the Republicans. Grier claims, "It is not a party tract, for Whitman had his own point of view. . . . Whitman therefore proposed the abolition of all parties. . . . Moreover, Fremont [the first Republican presidential candidate] was an abolitionist, and Whitman was not."[7] That this odd contrast (closer to an error than any other interpretation

of the tract that will be subsequently examined) emerged in the 1950s can be explained by that decade's falling in between two different waves of twentieth century historical revisionism on the coming of the Civil War.

In the 1930s and the 1940s the revisionist critique of the traditional view of the war's origins laid the blame on the zealotry of the North in pursuing an antislavery agenda. The second wave that began in the mid-1960s and continued for some twenty-five years took just the opposite approach: it sought to debunk the view that the Republican party objected to Southern power for reasons that were directly related to the slave system. Under this shift from one dominant strand of revisionism to another, Republicans metamorphosed from wild-eyed fanatics indifferent to the consequences of their absolutism to selfish cultural warriors too caught up in their sectional jealousies and hidebound prejudices to concern themselves with slavery itself.

There may be no direct link between the change in approach by historians of the period and the responses to *The Eighteenth Presidency!*, but a shift in how critics have positioned the tract seems to run parallel with that change. After the 1950s, the tract came to be seen as more, not less, radical than the Republican party. That development has had the beneficial effect of making *The Eighteenth Presidency!* seem a more respectable cousin to *Leaves of Grass* than it otherwise might. Yet the price for that rise in the tract's status has been to sever it from the conventionalities of party discourse. The early view of George Fredrickson in 1965 set a pattern for interpretations over the next three decades: "Whitman was through with parties. . . . Although as a 'free-soiler' he had some sympathy with the aims of the Republicans, he now [in *The Eighteenth Presidency!*] denied on theoretical grounds that there was any value in an established system of political parties."[8] Echoes of this view that the tract floated free from party can be nuanced or unqualified. They range from Betsy Erkkila's balanced conclusion that "[a]lthough Whitman was closest in his views to Fremont's Free-Soil platform, in *The Eighteenth Presidency!* he refuses to identify with any particular political party"[9] to a more extreme position that the denunciation of party amounts to a renunciation of political involvement. In Ezra Greenspan's formulation, we see how an emphasis on the tract's antipartyism can be taken so far as to deny that Whitman was calling for a solution within the realm of the political. With that independence, the tract is left free to join forces with the equally apolitical *Leaves of Grass*:

> But even in his tract, Whitman was not advising a political solution to the nation's political problems. . . . [A]s for the newly formed Republican party, despite its opposition to slavery, it was not then and would never be the party of the workingman. . . . The counsel he offered the young, then, in 1856 was essentially apolitical. . . . So here, too . . . his poetry and his prose polemic met on common ground.[10]

Here we have illustrated one of the roadblocks to viewing any of Whitman's writing in relationship to the discourse of a political party: while political party discourse is judged under the bright lights of its historical role and strategically adopted policy positions, which are merely reflected in a standardized rhetorical arsenal, Whitman's is seen as a route to an even more ideal worldview that it struggles to reflect in a new mode. In other words, one is viewed pragmatically and the other expressively. As a result, neither is approached from the angle of its internal discursive logic that forbids abstracting any one element from the larger rhetorical system in which it participates. Until Whitman's own celebrations of the working man are seen to be just as dependent on an outside rhetorical system as those of a political party's, the role of those celebrations within his poetry will be left obscured. This study's second chapter will join other critics in taking up that question. In the meantime, however, Greenspan's interpretation vividly illustrates a general trend in twentieth-century responses to *The Eighteenth Presidency!*: the distance a critic sees between party discourse and the tract correlates with how relevant to *Leaves of Grass* the critic judges *The Eighteenth Presidency!* to be.

It is fitting that near the very end of the twentieth century David S. Reynolds emphasized Whitman's conversion to Republicanism and described his tract as following "the Republican dialectic."[11] For just as there has been a major reassessment of the party antislavery movement by historians in the twenty-first century, so too has this century seen critics do a kind of justice to the Republican elements of *The Eighteenth Presidency!* that also promises to restore its lines of connection to Whitman's poetry. Again, there is a range of views on how those lines should be drawn. Peter Coviello believes "even in the most nakedly partisan of his Free-Soil Democrat diatribes [i.e., *The Eighteenth Presidency!*], Whitman manages to find a visionary strain."[12] The description "nakedly partisan" offers a welcome counter to twentieth-century evasions, but Coviello's main assertion leaves it ambiguous as to whether

Whitman teased out what was latent in the party discourse or mined, for his own use, elements that lay beyond its actual purpose and could be realized only in *Leaves of Grass* itself.[13] This assessment of the tract bears the traces, then, of that tendency to subordinate the occasional to the visionary, which appears most succinctly in Kerry Larson's twentieth-century formulation: "[*The Eighteenth Presidency!* is] a pamphlet ostensibly written to support John Fremont's bid for the presidency but reaching well beyond this occasion."[14]

Relying on no such hierarchy, another twenty-first-century critic offers an approach more suited to seeing the visionary as inhering within the occasional, as having no life outside it. Mark Maslan makes the important point that Whitman carries forward a specifically Republican view of labor: "Whitman [in the tract] presents the Republican ideal of free labor as a model not only for the economy but for popular government itself[,] . . . envisioning the work of legislating as essentially continuous with the work routine of some, if not all, skilled laborers."[15] Maslan here unburdens us from Greenspan's conclusion that the tract's celebration of the laboring man makes it extra-Republican. He also points us to the discursive unity of the piece that links its system of values with its practical remedies. Even Maslan's critical reading, however, implies that Whitman himself inaugurated that extension of a class valorization into the political realm. The purpose of the next chapter will be to show that Whitman is able to do what Maslan claims—celebrate labor as a way to direct the nation to a redeemed mode of political representation—specifically because of how his party took the mechanisms of national redemption as growing analogically out of its ideological principles. In such fantasies of collective action lies one significant contribution that party discourse makes to literary studies.

When it comes to the 1850s, the weight of the slavery issue has obscured such cultural functions. The tendency has been to place Republicanism precisely within the range of antislavery positions found when examining the broader national debate. Fortunately, an antidote to this trend is available within the pioneering and still central work of the historian Eric Foner.[16] His groundbreaking study from 1970 invites us to view Republicanism as a set of interlocking beliefs that should be evaluated not according to how closely this belief set hews to any other but according to its own internal logic. Some fifty years after its publication, Foner's work challenges us to consider Republicanism as a distinct mode of discourse—shifting our attention from

degree to kind. One question Foner raises is what the tradition of party discourse itself contributes to the antislavery mission when expressed in a mainstream party.

This approach in no way diminishes the affinities between Republican and abolitionist discourse. Indeed, the work by historians in the last thirty years has tended to complicate our view of what had once seemed a sharply subdivided spectrum of antislavery positions, with radical abolitionism at one extreme and the most watered-down, sail-trimming party action at the other. Whether in Daniel McInerney's study of the abolitionists' devotion to traditional republicanism; in Jonathan Earle's reevaluation of a group once considered the most racist and unprincipled wing of the party antislavery movement, the dissenting Jacksonian Democrats; in Mark Voss-Hubbard's explanation that many abolitionists saw the rise of the Republican party as reflective of a massive cultural shift toward their own principles; in Michael J. McManus's case that the antislavery impetus behind the Liberty party's slavery restrictionism found a new vessel in the Republican party years later; in Michael D. Pierson's revelation that the utopian egalitarianism of earlier radical parties carried over into the development of a mainstream antislavery party; or in James Oakes's emphasis that even the most tinkering Republican proposals had in their sights the ultimate extinction of slavery,[17] it begins to appear that the various branches of antislavery thought overlapped a great deal more than was assumed through most of the twentieth century.

The beliefs, goals, and undergirding cultural assumptions of most abolitionists and most Republicans were similar. Once again, then, we are directed to the arena where their true difference lay: the means they adopted to further their aims. Those means encompass more than the kinds of policy positions each group could propose, which were particularly limited for a party given that the political culture was almost universally deferential to the principle of state sovereignty. It is also a matter of the appeal each group, because of the cultural role it had assumed, was able to make. Republican appeals were channeled through the system of party discourse, which drew boundaries and opened possibilities that went beyond simply which national prescriptions a party could respectably promote: it was a system that gave a new complexion to what remained traditional antislavery national prophecy. Indeed, *The Eighteenth Presidency!* itself illustrates how the antislavery

critique of the nation's power relations could be adjusted to, and nourished by, the kind of jeremiad typical of party appeals.

Yet *The Eighteenth Presidency!*, as so many critics have observed, does indeed condemn political parties. That condemnation too, however, belongs to its Republicanism. In its very denial that it was a mere party, the Republicans tapped a part of the political imaginary that demonized party loyalty while lionizing party formation. Unearthing the ways Whitman's condemnation itself, paradoxically, affiliates the work with party discourse will not only further this century's critical project of restoring the tract to the terms it sets itself; it will also begin to point to the common goal of *Leaves of Grass* and the antislavery movement: to appropriate the party tradition of republican rescue. According to that tradition, allegiance to certain policies will itself enact the kind of cultural revolution that betokens a broader national freedom.

That the new Republican party claimed to have arisen on the grave of political parties is only formally paradoxical. When *The Eighteenth Presidency!* insists that "America has outgrown parties" (33), that assertion would not have seemed to abjure party participation to those following the developments of the two preceding years. As a practical matter, the Republican party had to recruit members from existing parties and therefore urged potential followers to put aside old loyalties. Yet Republican appeals went beyond the need to weaken existing party attachments. Republicans demanded people "sacrifice the selfish love of party on the common altar of our country's salvation."[18] As that phrasing illustrates, denunciation of party lay at the heart of the new party's call to abandon the old allegiances and habits of mind that stood in the way of national redemption. According to this diagnosis, political parties had been hijacked by the usurpers in order to institutionalize and, at the same time, disguise their control over the nation's destiny.

Republican denunciations of party tended to follow Whitman's track in painting a picture of "political tricksters" assuming "the mastery of the people."[19] Seeming to thrive on the people's support and participation, parties themselves had become the sturdiest barrier to the people's consciousness of lost agency; they gave the people a vehicle for participating in the day-by-day operations of the nation through a collective pooling of principle

and commitment, even as they suppressed the kind of solidarity that goes beyond the formal gratification of banding together in groups. Parties, then, offered the pageantry of sovereignty as a way to gradually rob the people of true sovereignty. Furthering this goal, they call for a specious commitment and loyalty that supersede a true examination of the nation's dangers. Party affiliation had become a matter of personal and social identity that both exempted and distracted the people from deeper individual and collective responsibilities. This was the implication when the Indiana Republicans, in their call for a convention, claimed that the people "had been drugged by the opiates of party."[20] Party had become the gravest threat to the individual independence upon which the survival of the republic depended: as one tract put it, many have been "so wedded to party interests as to have disfranchised themselves, and lost every particle of their political independence."[21] The new party's own organization was seen as an antidote to, not an extension of, that problem: it was the vehicle by which the people could "break the bonds of mere party slavery," could turn away from "the great idol, Party" toward "a bond of fraternity and [r]epublican unity."[22]

No one took that claim literally enough to find it internally contradictory.[23] As late as 1860, with his new party on the brink of national victory, William Seward could show his rhetorical dependence on the traditional republican critique by offering a damning account of the demoralizing effect of party over the previous decade. In the same speech he distinguished such corrupt instruments from a party that grew "through the inspiration of some new but great and generous impulse."[24] This turn in his speech encapsulates the rhetorical purpose of the Republicans' antipartyism. When Henry Wilson asserted at the first Republican national convention that the assemblage before him was a gathering of freemen, not a party,[25] he also revealed that same purpose: to represent their movement not as one more contender on the political stage but as the expression of the people's determination to reclaim something more than a merely nominal and mediated authority over the nation's future.

Over the last fifty years, various historians have demonstrated how the party system, culminating in the 1830s, came to life not by overturning the founders' opposition to parties but by assimilating the critique of parties into the very rationale for party formation. Gerald Leonard has been perhaps the historian to analyse this paradox and affirm it most vividly: "The develop-

ment of a positive theory of party rested on the partyists' ironic reaffirmation of antipartyism."[26] New parties in particular were prone to this strain of party rhetoric. As Ronald P. Formisano put it, new parties "proclaimed their hostility to politicians, politics as usual, and parties, and claimed to represent the people against corrupt party organizations."[27] Thus, the new Republican party often echoed the Jacksonians of the 1830s in representing their organization as nothing less than the whole body of the people suddenly emerging unencumbered by the party apparatus that had stifled them, even at times (especially in Whitman's native New York) claiming themselves to be the true Democratic party ready again to face the republic's enemies and their tools in party machinery. According to one Republican, the people are repudiating their "seduced and terrified representatives" to hear "the real unfettered democracy . . . now speaking."[28] As this passage suggests, what lay at the origin of the theoretical defense of party formation continued to inform how a given party positioned itself in relation to its opponent.

In joining the particular oppositional logic of party discourse, then, the political antislavery movement benefited from the tendency of each participant in a competitive political environment to project the evils of party onto its rival.[29] According to this tradition, the nation could be seen as divided between the oligarchic enemies of republicanism and the people as potential saviors of republicanism—the enemies having cunningly masked their aims through the instrument of a political party. The second party system, which eventually settled into the Democrats and the Whigs as the nation's binary choice, certainly took much of its polemical energy from that construction. To Democrats, the Whig party was the disguise taken on by the traditional class enemies of equality in an attempt to implicate the people themselves in their own subordination; to Whigs, the Democratic party was the engine by which the noble language of Jefferson could be exploited to turn the nation's levers of power into a money-making and office-dispensing machine supported by executive usurpation that annulled the people's will. In both cases, the malevolent force not only assumed the form of a party but also tapped "the maddening spirit of party"[30] in order to pass off its selfish aims as a national mission involving all the people in its execution.

The Republican party borrowed both the class critique of their opponents offered by the Democrats and the institutional critique of their opponents offered by the Whigs. The class enemy whose interests were served by

establishment parties was, of course, the slaveholding oligarchy; the usurpers who had commandeered the instruments of governance were doughfaces, those Northerners who did the bidding of their masters in the South. The traditional suspicion toward parties was thus particularly well suited for a movement that had long seen the nation's central problem as a failure of representation—the problem of how the people could hand over their sovereignty to those intent on prostituting themselves to the Slave Power. The Free Soil party in 1848 had enthusiastically taken up the critique of "party spirit" for "the corruption it has wrought in the politics of the country," allowing the Slave Power to control "the destinies of the republic."[31] The Free Democrat George Julian in 1853 went so far as to identify the mission of his movement as "emancipating the minds of men from the cursed tyranny of party."[32]

As a Free Democrat himself, Whitman had good reason to be invested in this rhetorical intensification. The Free Democrats were the antislavery party that struggled in the bleak years for the movement, 1850–53. It was partly composed of those few Democrats who, having bolted to the Free Soilers in 1848, refused after the election to join most of their fellow bolters in returning dutifully to the mainline party. Whitman's attitude toward the failure of most antislavery Democrats to stand by what he considered true Jeffersonian principles[33] is suggested by his letter to the 1852 Free Democratic presidential candidate, John Hale. He begins that letter, which anticipates many of the constructions found in *The Eighteenth Presidency!*, predicting "an American Democracy [i.e., a Democratic party] with thews and sinews worthy this sublime age."[34] Whitman's prophetic vision was thus bound up with the paradox that party was at once the sign of the nation's woes and the possible token of its salvation. Rescuing true Jacksonian Democracy from the Northern pretenders who now commanded its machinery was, for those Democrats who became Republicans, a task barely distinguishable from resisting the encroachments of the Slave Power or of the moneyed oligarchy (what one well-known Democratic paper that converted to Republicanism called "the plutocratic alliance"[35]). In making that switch, those Democrats saw themselves not as betraying but as holding fast to their traditional egalitarian views. Various historians have shown how this group insisted on retaining its Democratic ethos even as it joined a greater number of like-minded former Whigs, recent Know-Nothings, and longtime antislavery activists.[36] Therefore, however disheartening it may have been to that group when late

in the decade the Republicans adopted, but did not emphasize in the 1860 campaign, some old Whig economic planks,[37] Whitman was well positioned to see the Republican party as potentially the embodiment of a revived people, the "real live Democratic party" he foresees in his letter to Hale. But when writing *The Eighteenth Presidency!*, Whitman, fresh from witnessing the rehijacking of what he considered the true "Democracy," unsurprisingly framed his warning to the nation as a condemnation of party.

In *The Eighteenth Presidency!,* party's malevolent role bespeaks a breakdown in the nation's system of representation at many levels—with false political representation a symptom of a broader failure to carry the nation's strengths over into the realm of public performance and collective action. No connection remains between the healthy daily life of the republic and its political expressions: "all outside the influence of government . . . thrives and smiles. The sun shines, corn grows, men go merrily about their affairs" (26). Whitman here downplays what other antislavery figures emphasized—the commercial stake and hence complicity of the North in the slavery system, the rage for moneymaking that distracted the people from their historical obligations, the decline of the people's revolutionary fervor, and their collapse into a torpid complacency—in order to sharpen the contradiction between Northern economic life and Northern politics. Those who owe their place to party feed off the thriving world that others continue to create: "In the North and East, swarms of dough-faces, office-vermin, kept-editors, clerks, attaches of the ten thousand officers and their parties, aware of nothing further than the drip and spoil of politics—ignorant of principles, the true glory of a man." The claim that the nation's offices had been taken over by those who, in Whitman's words, "consign themselves to personal and party interests" (22) had been a common ground for attacks on state and federal administrations for some twenty-five years.

To the political antislavery movement in particular, the traditional attack on party time-servers was caught up in the problem of how the ostensibly free North could remain so deferential to a social system antithetical to its own. In a Free Soil supporter's remarkably understated formula in 1848, "freedom, somehow, suffers more from its party connexions with slavery, than slavery does by its connexion with freedom."[38] Slavery itself gained this

advantage, not "the South."[39] Indeed, Whitman emphasizes that the failure of representation in the North grew out of a prior failure of representation in the South—and the fact that the origins of that free-state problem lay outside the North's own domain helps to explain its peculiar pathologies. Whitman upbraids the Southern white nonslaveholder for submitting "to the espionage and terrorism of the three hundred and fifty thousand owners of slaves" (39). Down to the very terms it employs, Whitman's indictment echoes countless Republican diagnoses, for instance, the following from the major paper the *Springfield Republican*: "Three hundred and fifty thousand slaveholders . . . hold the poor millions among whom they live in a slavery as bitter, as real, and as humiliating as that which binds the negroes that wash their feet and till their soil."[40] Whitman's question "Are you too their slaves?" turns this diagnosis into a challenge (39).

Within the broader Republican cosmology, as in Whitman's tract, this analogical contamination of Southern political representation by the evils of the social system whose purposes it serves breeds its perverse equivalent in the North. Traditional class rule in one region gives way to a disenfranchisement of delegation in the other. The slavery of party is the only trace of the social system whose interests are served by the disenfranchisement. Slavery as a socioeconomic institution, though the ultimate foundation of Northern political performances, stands at so far a remove as to reduce those performances, when they operate outside the territories, to a pantomimic display. Throughout the period 1854–60, Republicans never hesitated to contrast the real constraints under which nonslaveholding freemen of the South lived with the particularly shameful self-degradation exhibited when uncoerced Northern workers voluntarily turned themselves into tools of a "distant aristocracy."[41] In Whitman's tract, for the politicians themselves, that geographic distance from their true masters expresses itself in an alienation from their homeland as a physical space. Thus, in the tract's imaginary topography, the panderers swarm over the surface like vermin who have no organic relation to the land, no connection to the people they pretend to serve, and even no fealty to their true masters. The complete divorce between government functioning and the people's purpose, according to the political antislavery movement, produced a curse of secondariness where the consistent and organic power relations in the South find their less evil but far more degraded double in the North.

The people are not so much directly enslaved by an oligarchy as cut off from their own power in the present moment. That outcome will be cemented should they choose one of a pair of nominees, James Buchanan for the Democrats and Millard Fillmore for the Americans (that is, Know-Nothings), who represent the past and whose degree of success will therefore measure the extent to which the nation will betray the genius of the age. Whitman here adheres to the common trope in campaign discourse about the two men, and especially Buchanan, as invalids whose life force is so detached from the true energies of the nation as to make them less candidates than avatars of decay.[42] In keeping with this pattern of representation, Whitman places emphasis not on the nominees' history of pandering to the interests of slavery but on their embodying an era that the nation has, in its daily activities, already moved past. Their shameful political record has worked its way into their constitution, so that in choosing them the people would not only be endorsing the nation's seemingly unshakable pattern of concession but incarnating the retrogressive forces that underlie that pattern.

The election of Buchanan or Fillmore would bring a formal end to the nation's exemption from the despotism and hierarchies that had ruled the world—in the tract's telling opening words—"before the American era" (19). Like Whitman, Republicans discovered in the toadyism of politicians the ugliest sign of America's collapse into old world patterns: "there are to-day specimens of servility, sycophancy, and abject degradation to be found in our land not excelled by any that exist under any despotism in the world."[43] In the tract's sixth section, Whitman introduces his typical account of the measures that spring from that sycophancy with the sorry lesson they teach: that misrule is "just as eligible to These States as to any foreign despotism . . . there is not a bit of difference" (23). In a paradox to be examined more fully in chapter 3, the passage of time narrows to nothing the distance between America and the continent from which it had broken—ostensibly to chart out a new path for the world.

Whitman did not have to look far for a model that would explain this historical development; it was part of the almost universally embraced discourse of republicanism, and political antislavery advocates often took advantage of the model's cultural dominance and of its tendency to forecast a republic's decline. According to the antislavery version, the nation had donated its founding energy to the world and yet in the process refused to nourish at

home the principle that had first given the nation life. As Whitman weaves back and forth between his denunciations of this inexorable trend and his ongoing celebration of the age's limitless potential for human development, the tension culminates in the tract's final sentences where Buchanan's or Fillmore's elevation will consign the nation to a dead world closed to the organic principles animating progress: "A pretty time for two dead corpses to go walking up and down the earth, to guide by feebleness and ashes a proud, young, friendly, fresh, heroic nation of thirty millions of live and electric men!" Here the world itself is the stage upon which America's capitulation will play out; the degrading show of surrender will stand out among the prophetic "whispers" of "historic denouements," the promise that "such things are to happen as mark the greatest moral convulsions of the earth" (44). A future that was trembling on the brink of realization will yield to a funeral march.

For the people to choose as their representative either Buchanan or Fillmore (Fillmore conveniently having headed "the sixteenth presidency," under which category Whitman begins his list of recent proslavery outrages), they would be acceding to the entropic tendency of world history to revert to old patterns of tyranny. It is only incidental in this context that Buchanan and Fillmore were, as old men, of an entirely different generation than the relatively young (43-year- old) Republican nominee, John Fremont, whom Republicans constantly celebrated as of "the present generation [with] no tortuous line of antecedents extending back into the past."[44] It is even of secondary importance that each has a shameful individual record in the nation's history of endless concession to the Slave Power. Those two facts merely paint in a brighter shade the embrace of death that the people would seal by elevating one of them and thereby severing the tie between their own epochal energies and the delegation of their authority:

> Two galvanized old men, close on the summons to depart this life, their early contemporaries long since gone, only they two left, relics and proofs of the little political bargains, chances, combinations, resentments of a past age, . . . standing for the first crop of political graves and grave-stones planted in These States, but in no sort standing for the lusty young growth of the modern times of The States. (29)

In selecting them, the people would be accepting the nation's history of concession in two senses, as practical measures worth continuing and as a

tradition congealed from an already dead past. For those who support such candidates or even "believe that any good can come out of them, you also understand not the present age" (30). If such men are the majority, the zombie leaders would be fit representatives of a lifeless nation with no organic force propelling it through time.

For Whitman, democratic instruments had come to be used as a smokescreen to hide the fulfillment of that other national potential for despotism planted at the same time as the Revolution. The principal instrument in that subterfuge was the Democratic party and the allure it offered to an enchanted people. When Whitman warns the working class that "a parcel of windy northern liars are bawling in your ears the easily-spoken words Democracy and the democratic party" (30), he not only repeats a standard Republican denunciation of the fateful nominalism clouding the people's choice ("the tinsel drapery of a blotted name"[45]); he points to the peril that underlies that nominalism: that a system of representation, backed up by an empty rhetorical arsenal, threatened to enlist the people in their own disenfranchisement and to make them agents in propelling democracy's demonic twin forward under the guise of popular representation.

The denunciation of parties in the tract, then, cannot be separated from the paradox whereby the nation that had ushered in the progressive forces of the modern age finds itself blocked from access to those energies as it moves through history. Political parties institutionalize that blockage when they, according to Republicans, have "no vital connection with the present time and progress," when they "wave above no eternal principle of right and justice."[46] The fragments of the political parties that had once expressed the concerns of the era in which they were born are "the only obstacle in the way of the free action of the public mind and the progress of truth."[47] Whitman's tract places that formal cause in the context of the final cause. If the politicians fail to represent the inner resolve of the people, that is because the people themselves have failed to realize it, let alone call upon it and make it operative in the world. The surrender of the nation's youthful energy to the decrepit old men reflects a failure to tap the live resources immediately available but somehow beyond reach for collective action. Changes in policy alone cannot reverse this decline because it is fueled by a more universal alienation of the people's several powers from the exercise of national power. The antipartyism of the tract undergirds its call for the people to reject mediations, to assume their true role in history by

foreswearing the dead formalism that at once serves and reflects a distant social system. Until they do that, the genius of the nation, latent within individuals and their social arrangements, will "not appear in the government" (23).

The new Republican party represented its movement as the only way to bring to an end the culture of self-chosen subordination, which promised to sever the nation permanently from the flow of progressive history. As contributors to the antiestablishment fervor of the years 1854–56, Republicans claimed to offer a generational revolt against the rigid and outmoded forms that had come to define political participation. The party was for those who "live in the present and future and not in the past, among the political fossils of other days and generations."[48] Such fossils were perfectly embodied in the "old fogies" nominated by the opposing procompromise parties. To Whitman, the pair's unimpeachable cultural solidity is what suffocates the living energy about to be realized in action: "The young genius of America is not going to be emasculated and strangled just as it arrives toward manly age" (26). "Still the two old men live in respectable little spots, with respectable little wants. . . . What has this age to do with them?" (29). In making this point, Whitman joined not only a common cultural gesture of the period but also a specific Republican critique of generational hangers-on:

> Young America has arisen in his might, the old political gods will be displaced, and men more in accordance with the spirit of the age will succeed them. . . . Away with him [Buchanan]! Away with these old fogies of an old school which belongs to a past age.[49]

Both passages shine their optimistic forecasts through the mist of the same danger: that the impetus of the present will be annulled by a life-denying reflex that falls back on old shibboleths. Here compromise with slavery is not represented as it is in other Republican constructions—as toadyism to the nation's ruling class—but as a habit stultifying the nation more out of inertia than out of malevolent intent.

For the people to shake free of this encumbrance, they needn't, like their brothers in the South, overthrow a ruling social oligarchy but rather disavow the mechanisms whereby the governing system of the nation bears no traces of their

own performances. The first step in this disavowal was cultural disenthrallment. This facet of the tract's prescription is so reminiscent of *Leaves of Grass* as to obscure its dependence on the Republican party's self-representation as the enemy of hierarchies built upon custom. The two canons share a contempt for the encrusted standards of respectability that stifle the people's true expression. An unconscious deference makes the people a party to their own degradation; class hegemony, with its solid economic foundation in the South, in fact needs no vast feudal estates to give it staying power when the people's automatic responses themselves sustain its independent life:

> At present, we are environed with nonsense under the name of respectability. Everywhere lowers that stifling atmosphere that makes all the millions of farmers and mechanics of These States the helpless supple-jacks of a comparatively few politicians. Somebody must make a bold push. The people, credulous, generous, deferential, allow the American government to be managed in many respects as is only proper under the personnel of a king and hereditary lords. (21)

Like many political parties before them, the Republicans railed against this class so as to represent their party as the vessel of the people's recovered self-respect. Indeed, both Whitman and Republicans tapped a long-standing tradition here, one particularly prominent in the Democratic party. Ely Moore in 1840, for instance, attributed declining republican freedom "to the natural frailty of man, warped by prejudice, blinded by scholastic attachment to antiquated customs, abuses, and privileges."[50] In such warnings, self-subordination fuels historical reversion, which eventually will fix upon the nation new forms of class rule.

Republicans picked up this tradition in such a way as to integrate it with their more policy-specific mockery of those who wish to save the Union from antislavery agitators. The following passage, with its echoes of Whitman, makes the political posture of intersectional compromise seem equivalent to an exclusive club with an ancestral test for membership:

> The salvation of the State must be accomplished in a fashionable way, and after mouldy precedents . . . nobody may be permitted to save the country that cannot exhibit a sheepskin diploma, a certificate of character from his clergyman, a pedigree of at least two generations, and a portentous tax bill from the assessors.[51]

In this particular passage, national freedom depends on lifting the cultural prohibitions that elevate a professional and hereditary aristocracy on the pretext that their social merit gives them prior authority. It implicates the language of compromise not just in the resulting ever more strident demands from the Slave Power (the principal danger foreseen by Republicans) but in cultural and class subservience that degrades the people even before any fresh territory or liberty is sacrificed to slavery.[52]

Republicans typically drew an analogy between the "oppression" of the taskmaster in the distant South and that of the "wire-pullers" usurping the self-rule of the people in the free states; both sprang from the same cultural source, "that old fogyism which wants caste and aristocracy to keep down *merit* with whatever age or birth it is associated."[53] That analogy at once contributed to and was aided by an accusation that had for years come to seem almost mandatory in party appeals: translating the opposing side's political victories as a resurgence, however hidden, of aristocracy's triumphant "degradation of a whole people into tools and chattels of a clique of political intriguers."[54] Thus, Whitman employs the language of subservience in his description of the average Northerner. The "credulous, generous, deferential" (21) people turned the nation into a debased spectacle of self-willed historical reversion, where the old hierarchies and monarchical rule have no actual status but are conjured back into existence by the practices that presuppose them, if they do not actually create them. How this model of reversion bears on *Leaves of Grass* will be examined in chapter 3. In both the tract and the poetry cycle, the model comes from party discourse. The political system drags back from the past patterns of subordination and gives them new life at the level of cultural practices.

To Republicans, then, the means by which they could succeed as a party was also a substantive goal that related both analogically and causally to their mission to prevent the spread of slavery. Thus, when a New York organ instrumental in organizing the new state party laid out the Republican program, it made no distinction between means and ends but placed side by side the parallel missions of releasing the people from elitist political practices and keeping the territories free: "to restrict the growth and the influence of the aristocratic relations of Master and Servant—to democratize the spirit of the Politics and the Society of this whole country."[55] A virtuous circle will develop when defiance of slavery's demands helps to institutionalize the same spirit

that had first come out to prompt that defiance, and that institutionalization in turn will render inevitable an end to the concessions that had done so much to demoralize the people at the first stage of decline. As we will see in chapter 2, this bilateral mutual dependence of a free West and a people who have come into their own power becomes a central figure in *Leaves of Grass*. For Republicans, that dependence made their own victories a boon for the nation independent of their policy consequences.

Parties had long taken the mechanisms of their own formation as a sign that the national goals they foresaw as their ultimate purpose would be realized. This prophecy was often closely related to the basic contrast of Whitman's tract: the people have a strength and an inchoate purpose that they have been cowed into leaving unrealized; that reluctance has been built into the unspoken regulations operating in the nation's political system; breaking the hold of those regulations therefore indicates not only the recovery of the people's self-respect but an escape from the narrow world that had laid down only certain tracks for collective action. The sudden movement of the people outside those tracks would itself prove that the world where only the most circumscribed and delusive forms of political participation were possible was as doomed as the final moribund class-bound world the usurpers sought to bring about. In the fourth chapter, we will see how in *Leaves of Grass* Whitman takes further one of the common metaphors by which the party system had come to figure this redemptive process.

The people's largely self-chosen subordination can be more easily dispelled than the sturdier class hierarchies of which it is the debased mirror image. Whitman describes the cultural constraints robbing the people of their sovereignty as an "atmosphere" (21), with the suggestion that they take on no bodily form able to hamper the people's will by force. That atmosphere is created partly by the "fog of prevarications" (32) that hides from the workers their individual stake in the question of slavery in the territories. The spectral nature of the office-holders' rule comes out in the tract's recurring narrative event of appearing—as if simply walking on the national stage will be the proof of the redemption it will help to bring about. The speaker positions himself as the frustrated observer waiting for this development: he laments that he can see nowhere the progeny of the people's inherent freedom; he asks where the workers, the laborers, the common sense of the states are. The question "Where is the real America?" (23) implies a presence that is

defined by its absence—the people's faltering self-expression places a real and realized America in the distance waiting to be spotted.

The speaker's imperfect perspective is an outgrowth of the people's own; they struggle for a realization of themselves in word or deed that they can at the moment barely imagine. The people's resolve has "hardly yet arrived at definite proportions, or to the knowledge of itself" (30). Their rescue depends on their coming to full consciousness; when they do, the means of their salvation will be at hand as the inevitable result. Thus, when the Republican candidate is finally introduced, he seems only half corporealized as "the Redeemer President of These States" (39), teetering on the brink of an embodiment that depends on something other than himself. This passage, perhaps added after his nomination in June, offers Fremont as a hope to be realized when the people have ushered it in through their prior redemption. Such mythologizing of the party's candidate was more common in Republican poetry than in its prose. In the following campaign poem, Fremont arrives as the mark of the people's own escape from demoralization and apostasy:

> We lost our way in slavery's night,
> So black we scarce knew wrong from right,—
> We toiled through sloughs of pain and shame
> Before the *Mountain Hero* [Fremont] came![56]

Fremont is ambiguously cause and effect here, as he is in Whitman's tract. His name appears as the section title "[To FREMONT, OF NEW YORK]," and the section itself then describes the man who shall serve as Redeemer president, "whenever the day comes for him to appear" (39). This prophecy, at once an address to the candidate and an invocation of him, sublimates personality. The candidate is less an individual complete with a personal biography (Fremont was "of New York" only as a temporary resident) than an emanation of the people's new resolution: he is the states, in that sense, themselves. How is this apparition, however, to show itself? By this point, the tract has already begun to identify a single mechanism by which to clear the cultural and institutional detritus that keeps the redemptive figure from assuming a finished form.

The temporally vague and almost tautological prediction that the redeemer president will arrive "whenever the day comes for him to appear" (39) seems to fill out the earlier prediction offered at the end of the tract's first section.

There Whitman is so assured that the condition for redemption he names, and that condition alone, must be met that he foregoes detailed elaboration: "Of course, the fault . . . is of the people themselves, and will mend when it should mend" (20). For the people to make their daily life active in the world, they must tap primal powers of the self that derive from a collective source. These powers lie in the original founding of the nation that the tract represents as lying dormant while the gradual process of corruption and concession played itself out over time.

Somewhat surprisingly, given the Emersonian antitextualism of *Leaves of Grass*, these powers appear as texts broadly defined; all of them are what the Revolutionary period had bestowed, but they are listed in such a way as to obscure the difference between principle, model, inspiration, and document. They are named as a "platform" to set them apart from the deceptive and fleeting platform of the political parties the tract has just devoted several sections to condemning. The sentence immediately before sees the fall of parties as an overall institutional collapse clearing away the deceptive language that has beguiled and distracted the nation: "With the downfall of parties go the platforms they are forever putting up" (34). This turn in the tract derives from one of its most central distinctions—between, on the one hand, discourse developed temporarily as the occasion demands to obscure and accommodate the victories of a usurping class and, on the other hand, the everlasting language that will clear the channels of perception and thus make the people immune from the spell cast by the passing cant of the age. The delusive and temporary "compacts" (as they were often called), never good for anything but to gain the slaveholding class more time for fresh usurpations, stand apart from the incorruptible original compacts. And the "platforms" Whitman puts forward are, of course, not platforms at all, but the people's bulwark against the temptations offered by the corrupting passage of time. For good reason, the critic Kerry Larson finds a similar Free Soil assertion by Whitman in the 1840s to rest on an evasion of the constitution's ambiguity.[57] But the claim was less a rigorous reading of a text or of history than a rhetorical gesture to reinforce how the oligarchy could be overthrown by a restoration of the nation's true origins.

Republicans positioned themselves not as the instrument of a new language that would redeem the nation but as the agents of a purifying excavation and cleansing that would leave the nation with nothing but its original impetus and

momentum upon which to complete its organization and expansion. Against such a force the usurpers would be defenseless. Of course, the question of how to interpret the constitution to determine whether or not it sanctioned slavery in the territories was fiercely contested. But the particular way that Republicans tended to frame the debate sheds light on the tract's path to liberation from proslavery constructions. They took as their charge protecting the constitution from the contamination of the ruling class's distortions, implying that if so protected, it would provide freemen all the resources they need to redeem the nation. In a widely published letter, Josiah Quincy insisted that the party would "restore the Constitution to its original purity" and "relieve that instrument, which Washington designed for the preservation and enlargement of freedom, from being any longer perverted to the multiplication of Slave States and the extension of slavery."[58] Edward Wade went so far as to suggest that the preamble to the constitution had been deliberately designed to bar future generations from "finding slavery" in the rest of the document.[59] This claim that they were safeguarding in their own assertions the original purity and historical purpose of the text was the mirror image of the typical Democratic and conservative metaphor of the constitution as the barrier to discursive chaos. According to that view, the constitution was the "unshaken" protective rock against which, in President Pierce's words, antislavery's "storm of frenzy and faction" would break.[60]

These party constructions shed light on the long middle passages of *The Eighteenth Presidency!*, where Whitman, it seems, goes out of his way to emphasize the limits on federal antislavery action built into the "organic compacts" of the states. While the phrase "organic laws" was commonly employed in the period, the phrase "organic compacts" was rare. The critic who has analysed most systematically the phrase and principle of "organic compacts" in Whitman in general, Ivy G. Wilson, has usefully described the expression's function in *The Eighteenth Presidency!* as mapping a relation "not only between the states themselves but between the United States and its founding documents (Declaration and Constitution), its intermediaries (Congress), and its meta-narratives ('rights of man')."[61] The phrase thus at once implies a contract, a source, a founding energy, an ongoing life force, a division of powers, and an underpinning. It is on all these capacities that Whitman rests his faith in their efficacy, but the function of the organic compacts also progresses over the second half of the tract. Whitman's tract

begins to inch toward making the original compacts a matter of embodiment, not of organizational principles—of individual entitlement enlivened by the force of national action.

As a result, the several states can come to represent the nation's potential to include in its embrace all peoples and all political outcomes: "In both physical and political America there is plenty of room for the whole human race; if not, more room can be provided" (39). Whitman's gradual but final shift from limitation to limitlessness in these sections lays the groundwork for his adopting a new voice in the next section. He gains that voice as one who embodies the organic compacts and thus can address the South on terms that equally abrogate and realize the warning to the free states in earlier parts of the tract.

If the states themselves contain the people's authority, then it follows that the speaker must turn to the South to call for an end to the slaveholders' hegemony in that region. He proceeds to do that, and his diagnosis of the drag on American politics changes entirely as a result. Gone are the dire forecasts of continual demoralization of the free states; they are replaced with a guarantee offered in the tone of calm resolve that matches, as he informs the South, what lies at the core of those populating his own region. In insisting on that resolve, he lays out programmatically the policy that was the central Republican position of banning slavery in the territories—the one on which the most radical and the most conservative wings of the new party could, and did, agree. Whitman describes this position as if it were an already settled national policy scarcely even requiring enactment, so sure is he of the determination in the free states: "What is done, is done" (41). On what grounds has he developed this new assurance?

The speaker's claim to a knowledge of the people that is lost on others requires him to give voice to what he had earlier declared existed only in potential. It is almost as if in assigning himself that role he hopes to overcome the frantic searching for the people's resolve that had tormented him earlier, back when he was looking for a sign of it in the political world. In that respect, the confidence of the voice is the corollary to the inchoate nature of what he reports: "From my mouth hear the will of These States taking form in the

great cities" (41). When addressing those who are denied even the chance to observe, which had permitted his search and shown him the "effervescence" (30) of the bustling free states, he loses the anxious sense that he should be able to, but cannot, notice in routine observation the legitimate political fruits of that power. Now that he can deduct it from what he has already seen in his new role as a more trusty informer, the tension of conflicting signs is resolved by being channeled into his voice. The people gain an authority from the duty of the speaker to assert his own authority; and the purpose of apostrophe that Jonathan Culler has discovered—for the poetic voice to "summon images of its power so as to establish its identity as poetical and prophetic voice"—seems to solve the puzzle of the nation's identity.[62] Republicans consistently called upon the free states themselves to put their political sovereignty to the purpose of becoming a friendly messenger, one that will communicate to the South the nation's true impulses. The official manifesto of the state party of Maryland made this duty the key to a new basis of national unity: "In the South there can never be a party to assist in redressing [slavery's victories] until the North dispels, by its unanimity, the illusion that its people are willing to acquiesce in those victories."[63]

Whitman's challenge to Southerners is clearly a case of oratorical apostrophe, where the persuadable target remains the tract's global addressee, not the ostensible addressee of the localized rhetorical trope.[64] It becomes in effect, then, a new challenge to the people of the free states to end their internal exile and to become what he glimpses in a prophetic vision of the land itself. Relevant to this intensification of the appeal is the function the critic Sean Franzel has found in apostrophe: the attempt to configure a "utopian community."[65] That community is brought out of the shadow of political acquiescence only in the speaker's direct address—to the slave states and about the free states. Even within the terms of the tract, then, the resolve is fictional, a result of the speaker's own gestures. The disparity between this stance and the stance of fear and disgust that Whitman, along with other Republicans, adopted when discussing the free states does not indicate a tension within the party's discourse; the two interlock within a coherent rhetorical appeal. If freedom's inherent power can be taken as a potential already realized when addressing its enemy, then implicitly the charge to the people to shake off their stupor should be easy to obey, were they only willing. The challenge to the South ricochets back to the free states themselves.

Yet for all the discussion of the national resolve, strong as the "metal of death," that Whitman sees teeming in the cities of the free states, this section of the tract is vague on the question of what organization will wield that sword or, more generally, how the power he finds in the citizenry will be expressed in collective action against the politicians who are thwarting its will. That desideratum, however, follows the logic of the tract's development: the doubt his address to the South seems to dispel returns by the end of the tract when he again is alone with his own observations of Northern politics and he can only resume his appeal for the creation of what he had just proclaimed as accomplished. Therefore, one must turn to the earlier extended condemnation of the political system for what amounts to a brief hallucination of the agent necessary to form a collectivity able to impose its will. Such an agent flashes into the presentation for a moment and soon blends back into the account of the parasitic and class-bound office holders. Its antecedents in party discourse will be examined in chapter 4. Stylized and mythic as it is, the description in its very artificiality sheds light on the project of *Leaves of Grass* to imagine and invoke a new version of the people tearing up the nation's paths of political acquiescence: "A new race copiously appears, with resolute tread, soon to confront Presidents, Congresses and parties, to look them sternly in the face, to stand no nonsense" (27).

Whitman's image of a new "breed" (his term in *Leaves of Grass*) reoccupying the land from the invading office holders aligns the tract with the core affirmation of Republican prophecy: that a newly constituted people, by its mere awakening into consciousness, will spontaneously band together and thereby override the patterns of hegemony and co-option that had come to define the nation. The party represented this force not as a new organization but as a new agent altogether. Only such an agent can slay the office-holding monster, can break the stranglehold of party on the people's will. That is because it is the expression of the energy that had been submerged in the long process of political usurpation by those forces. The rhetorical emphasis on its sudden appearance therefore conforms to the romance mode of party discourse, according to which the enthralled land suddenly finds its rescuing hero in the very victims of the enthrallment. The following example of this trope from a Republican newspaper adopts a visionary mode and thereby brings out the parallel between this typical party forecast and Whitman's tract. Whitman introduces his sudden discovery of the new race with the assurance

that "another power has . . . arisen" (26); this piece makes that same claim after briefly dispensing with the temporary distraction of political parties: "It is the mighty people who are coming. Parties and party shibboleths are forgotten. The birth of a new and majestic power is at hand."[66]

The adjective "majestic" implies that the display of the people suddenly becoming sovereign will amaze, and perhaps overawe, the nation's false representatives. Even in the absence of the contextual pressures that give it that charge in Whitman's tract, the arrival of this new power is as much an apparition as a reorganization, as much a spectre as a marshalling. American parties had long represented their formation and triumph as the magical coming into being of an as-yet-unrealized potential, whose entry onto the stage would make all previous accommodations seem like a dispelled dream. A party would explain its emergence not as the need to select new emissaries of the people but as the rising of the people into their own full stature, able at last to thwart the conspiracies of interest and faction that had barred them from true participation in the republic. That this trope was available from the rhetoric of the party system proved as useful to *Leaves of Grass* as it was to the new political party arising in the same period. In this prospect of the people realizing themselves in collective action—action true at once to their material conditions and to the revolutionary heritage that had given them birth—both Whitman and his party saw a development that would mirror and anticipate in its unfolding the more practical salvation of the country to come.

The tract's intermittent bursts of confidence—when naming the new collectivity, when addressing the South—stand in sharp relief against its dominant mode of warning and condemnation. In that pattern of fluctuation between hope and fear, the tract follows the logic of the American jeremiad, where affirmations can emerge only upon the perception of an undeniable decline; and the speaker's voice rouses itself up only upon being thrown back to a past where the resources for national reinvigoration lie, ready to be put to their new purpose. More specifically, Whitman's tract follows the most common strategy in Republican jeremiads: a tangible sense of national purpose seems to spring out of the recognition that the Slave Power is on the brink of

a complete and permanent conquest and the people are on the verge of an irreversible degradation. The nation as presently constituted cannot reverse that trend; for that task, only a nation in utero that takes its impulse from the final vanishing moment of hope can rescue republicanism.

Such a force must first be imagined. It is no accident that *The Eighteenth Presidency!* begins with the question "First, who are the nation?" or that the principal Republican slogan was the clearly counterfactual "Freedom National, Slavery Sectional." The success of the new party depended on establishing that the version of the nation that would foster its emergence, the version of the nation that Republicans had to reconstruct in order to envisage a remedy to corruption, was one and the same as the nation that lay dormant already in its core elements, when rightly comprehended. While studiously denying in its official pronouncements that its policies would interfere with slavery in the states, in its rhetorical stances the party occasionally threw off that restraint. Thus, Ben Wade translated the key Republican interpretation of the constitution—that it made slavery, solely the creature of state or municipal law, impossible wherever federal jurisdiction applied—into a motto that does not break past the programmatic confines of that claim but nevertheless insinuates into it a broader prophecy of national redemption: "within the pale of the United States, I claim that *all* is Freedom."[67] This formula implies that the nation's geographical dimensions will themselves leave its deepest impulses free to operate once released and abstracted from their temporary, local contaminations. In the very act of conceding its limits, the declaration figures the narrow field of possible free-state action as the nation's true essence.

This is the same confidence that rumbles through *Leaves of Grass*; both Wade and Whitman project a nation that is already there, at some level, ready to be spotted through the mists of the accidental: as Whitman writes in the 1860 edition, "O I believe there is nothing real but America and freedom!"[68] Both Wade's "I claim" and Whitman's "I believe" give away that each assertion depends for its truth-value on the stabilizing framing of its self-assertive formulation. Wade and Whitman are expressing their resolve to imagine away the threats to the nation's promise in order to set the stage for confronting those threats. A hallucination of uncompromised freedom becomes the perceptual ground for action. On that ground alone could party and poet demand of the people an action worthy of the fantastical

nation they imagined. When an antislavery party thus arrogated to itself the power to foresee a true nationality, however, it was also unavoidably entering the arena where the challenges to its own legitimacy wielded the strongest sting.

Whitman's entire tract, like *Leaves of Grass* itself, joins the political antislavery project of delineating nationality so that it no longer seemed to entail, as it did with the conservative version dominant in the early 1850s, an endless procession of so-called compromises with slavery. Republicans had no choice but to go through that representational avenue in order both to legitimize themselves and to present their program not as the work of a section or a faction but as a realization of the nation's founding mission, which, far from threatening the Union, would place it on the only safe footing. The conservative rhetorical near monopoly[69] on how to define the nation served a dual purpose: it offered a rationale for permitting slavery's usurpations that did not depend on overt support for slavery as an institution; and it seemed to rule out in advance an antislavery party as unpatriotic and dangerous. Republicans had to break that monopoly in order to achieve their practical program, and that requirement turned the barrier of proscription into an opportunity to tap all the rhetorical resources of the party tradition. In other words, the very party system that had barred them, once successfully entered, could also offer a more solid justification for the emergence of a dedicated antislavery agent—itself a kind of stand-in for the new nation it demanded. By cracking the codes of party, then, the political antislavery movement would confer a deeper kind of sanction onto its program, making it seem the only one compatible with what party discourse had long set as the goals of national organizations: realizing the bonds of unity within the nation, keeping alive the revolutionary energy that gave it life, and carrying that energy into a mission of national development.

Leaves of Grass largely dispenses with the polemical context of legitimization while still serving a legitimizing purpose by entering what one Republican called "the contest for the Nationality of Liberty."[70] Whitman's cycle makes the universally embraced national goals of party seem to be attainable only if citizens channel their resources through a historical force that will ensure the freedom of the nation's spaces. *The Eighteenth Presidency!* represents the people as having mustered up merely a rote engagement with a legacy that constituted them. The prescriptions, the celebrations, the admonitions, the

doubts, the prophecies of the people's power in the prewar editions of *Leaves of Grass* need to be seen in the context of the tract's account of the hijacking of republican instruments for despotic purposes.

The greatest significance, then, to the insufficiently recognized party rhetoric of *The Eighteenth Presidency!* lies in the absence of those party signs in *Leaves of Grass*. When Whitman's tract can be so unqualifiedly Republican and yet share many of the tropes, associations, and national representations of his great poetry cycle, the question then becomes how to account for those features common to the two works when they are shorn of their clear party markers. *Leaves of Grass* fulfills a more fundamental need for the movement than an explicit campaign appeal: it does the party's more important cultural work of aligning the prophetic potential of party discourse with the assumptions and goals of political antislavery. Each of the following chapters, then, will consider one of the various ways in which *Leaves of Grass* overcomes the division between inborn power and political authority that *The Eighteenth Presidency!* identifies as the root of the nation's ills. And, in each case, Whitman will be shown to be borrowing a paradoxical rhetorical stance: the posture through which the Republicans—by claiming to channel forms of national mobilization for which partisan formation was a mere instrument—sought to evade their organization's status *as* a party. In other words, the evasion of party in *Leaves of Grass* is not only anticipated by the antipartyism of *The Eighteenth Presidency!* but is also reflected, paradoxically, in the Republican party's utopian self-representations.

Even though, and indeed because, *Leaves of Grass* itself downplays the polemical and party context of its maneuvers in order to make them seem more inescapable, the critical task of this study is to show how those maneuvers begin to appear when restored to that context. Over twenty years ago, the critic M. Wynn Thomas emphasized the need for this critical maneuver when he reminded us that Whitman himself privately saw his poetry cycle within the context of the conservative charge that the Republican party was exclusively Northern and hence "geographical." Thomas sees some of Whitman's poetry as a "poetic rebuttal of such an accusation." As he points out, Whitman's utopian representations of his nation must be viewed as entering into a contested field: Whitman's "numbingly predictable invocation[s]" of an expanding West, for instance, "take on a rather different complexion when . . . placed in the context of the furious political debates of

the day."[71] In this directive for a reading practice, Thomas expresses exactly an important premise of this study: taking *Leaves of Grass* as an indirect answer to conservative constructions defamiliarizes its celebrations of America's contribution to global progress until they begin to appear something other than mere intensifications of the national mythos.

When even Whitman's most utopian proclamations are placed in that light, the stakes in the contest rise into visibility within *Leaves of Grass* itself. In other words, *Leaves of Grass* must be seen partly as a kind of counter-discourse. According to the nineteenth-century French literary scholar Richard Terdiman, cultural contests work by elevating claims that often lack any real-life practical consequence but that fit into a larger arena of representational competition by which they gain their polemical force: a discursive event in this realm "always presuppose[s] a horizon of competing, contrary utterances against which it asserts its own energies,"[72] and one task of this study is to hold *Leaves of Grass* down in that competitive universe despite Whitman's attempts in some of his rhetorical postures to wriggle away.

There are parallel consequences to this study's two strategies: taking *Leaves of Grass* as what Terdiman calls a counterdiscourse and viewing it through the narrow prism of party politics. The constraints within that highly conventional system of discourse mimic and exaggerate a restraining condition evident in the wider range of cultural discourse of the period—that the areas open to contestation did not, for the most part, reside within the realm of fundamental principles. To be sure, no dispute could be more fundamental than the one over slavery. Even with a new mainstream antislavery party, however, the nation's split on that question was not itself expressed directly in the party system because antislavery had so little purchase (or in some states legal sanction) in the South and because the few defenses of slavery as a national good that sprouted up in the free states were, by the 1850s, scorned and marginalized. How easy the task for an antislavery party would have been if conservative Northern parties had simply put forward a positive defense of slavery—but, despite their enthusiasm for racial and racist appeals, the procompromise parties declined to take that risk. Instead, within the free states, both parties that supported and parties that opposed accommodating the slave interest's demands channeled those positions through a common code, made up of widely shared beliefs, constructions, and representations. The competition, then, was not over the existing consensus but over ownership

and deployment of the codes, the right and opportunity to manipulate them so as to make them imply in their very use either resistance or capitulation to slavery's demands.

In his study of representations of Elizabeth I during her reign, Louis Montrose explains how a discursive contest operating under such constraints involves a "repertoire of representational forms and figures," tropes whose very limits rendered them vulnerable to the kind of transformative manipulation that literary works are particularly well suited to perform. If the rhetorical system was open to transformation, it is because the system rested on the foundation of shared models and assumptions that fermented in what Montrose calls the political imaginary. Only because of the constant rearticulation of "such formal elements in new configurations" was the "political imaginary . . . unstable," working "against attempts to . . . enforce uniformity in the political culture."[73] The leading historian of the Republican party, Eric Foner, in his later introduction to his canonical study of the party's ideology, shows how germane Montrose's model is to the period when he observes that "the very universality of [the common language of politics] camouflaged a host of divergent connotations and emphases."[74] It is within the field of these divergent connotations and emphases that *Leaves of Grass* stages its interventions.

What makes the situation in mid-1850s America distinctive is that a long marginalized discourse was storming the gates of the dominant one without having completed all the preliminary cultural work necessary to coordinate its claims with the demands of the party arena. The tropes of party were an easy route of access here, but they had been so long in the service of mainstream national parties as to weaken their elasticity. Whitman's poetry cycle attempts to complete the work of giving the long-standing figures of party an antislavery charge strong enough to seem inherent in them. To do this, in most cases he needed to break from the traditional confines of those tropes, which had been circumscribed by their endless repetition. While even the new or recent antislavery parties worked within those confines, Whitman massages to the surface the utopian aspirations long dormant in the tropes despite their overuse. In doing so, he carries them into realms and toward conclusions that they couldn't reach in their party application.

The different rhetorical situation in each case would determine the strategies required for this appropriation. Almost without exception, even in the

overtly political poems of the 1860 edition, Whitman would detach party figures from the particular issues in dispute, which weighed them down and made them seem a mere rhetorical means to a policy end. The one exception to that practice will be considered in chapter 3, where Whitman's contribution to his party's revisionary rhetorical project will come out most clearly in his diagnosis of what the Fugitive Slave Law had wrought. Elsewhere, Whitman leaves such practical applications implicit, in order to perform different operations on the rhetorical resources of party. In some cases, Whitman needed to tease out the complete historical trajectory that seemed built into the trope's origin but that had been pushed into the background by the context of relatively insignificant interparty competition. In other cases, Whitman managed to infect the trope with the ramifications by which party antislavery could, and was, attempting to turn it into a vehicle for its own program. Those two cases are most starkly illustrated in the two tropes examined in chapters 4 and 5, and the difference between the two corresponds with another variation within the rhetorical situation. In some cases, the figures were so widely shared that they bore no marks of ownership and needed only to be extended and redirected; in other cases, they could be set on a new polemical path only in the act of explicitly reclaiming them for antislavery and discrediting their more common deployments. It is in the fifth chapter, then, that the analysis bears some affinity with Colin Wells's recent study of the "poetry wars" in the revolutionary period and under the first party system. Though I will largely disregard the distinction—central to Wells's study—between party discourse in prose and in poetic form, what Wells calls the "speaking back" to other texts[75] that characterized the political poetry of this earlier period will be key to contextualizing both the party rhetorical contest and *Leaves of Grass*'s own indirect contribution to that contest. Whether or not any one trope was subject to that kind of overt competition, however, political antislavery's rhetorical readjustments lay on the bedrock not only of shared figures but also of shared beliefs.

The principal difference between the competing national imaginaries embraced by conservatives (of various parties) and the political antislavery vision came down to the means by which the people could ensure in their present action a progressive future. In the conservative vision, the people had a duty to protect the settled arrangements of the nation so that its structure, maintained in its integrity, could securely launch the Union on a path that

would end with a liberty so perfect as to embrace, at least in its leadership, the entire world. In the political antislavery vision, the people had to realize and anticipate historical progress in the contours of their present performances, generating an impetus to the desired future by imitating prospectively its liberated mode of action. Failing to do so, the people must give up any hope that such a future will arrive. This basic contrast enters into the narratives of national realization in *Leaves of Grass*. They enjoin the people to invest their performance with a kind of historical potency that is antithetical to the adherence, allegiance, and compliance demanded by conservatives. The danger of a procedural and almost unconscious slide into despotism described in *The Eighteenth Presidency!* becomes in *Leaves of Grass* the danger of the people taking up a merely formal and ahistorical relationship to their governance, which dooms the nation to despotism even before that relationship bears any practical fruit.

The task, then, of *Leaves of Grass* runs parallel to the task of Whitman's party: to identify latent and deployable powers that will override the networks of private interest that have arisen through the people's neglect and have in turn corrupted the people's system of engagement. The slave interest seeks to immunize the present from the infection of historical development by marshalling interests into a fixed and unassailable order. Once acceding to that order, the people lose any capacity to resist. Their sovereignty then lies within a different line of inheritance, one where the nation still harbors powers, both collective and individual, that have been planted by history but cannot emerge until the present is infused with its prophetic potential. In order to enter into their true prophesied role, the people must burst through the false mediations that have obscured those still latent powers by rigidifying the present into a closed system. Each of the following chapters anatomizes one of those latent powers.

Seen in the most general terms, *The Eighteenth Presidency!* tells a traditional tale of republican decline, triggered by the dangers foreseen specifically by party antislavery. Such warnings tended to conclude that the people have become, as a New York state editor put it, "too negligent of their sovereign duties and too careless of their political institutions."[76] If Whitman's tract anatomizes the second of those problems, his poetry cycle provides a map for the people to take up their "sovereign duties" by reconstituting themselves in a way that a true apprehension of their heritage both allows and

demands. And the crisis of the speaker in *The Eighteenth Presidency!*—the drama of his efforts to recognize in the same body politic whose corruptions are everywhere evident some expression of the power he sees in each individual American—becomes for the speaker in *Leaves of Grass* a struggle to reverse the people's abdication by overcoming the blocks to his own perception of the redemptive alternative.

CHAPTER TWO

The Sovereignty of Labor in Party Discourse and *Leaves of Grass*

As part of his address to the working class in *The Eighteenth Presidency!*, Whitman demands that they not surrender to the slave interest in the Western territories to which they alone rightly have a claim:

> Workmen! Workwomen! Those immense national American tracts belong to you; they are in trust with you; they are latent with the populous cities . . . and inalienable homesteads, of your successors.[1]

Whereas most passages in Whitman's tract echo countless prose works circulating throughout the free states in the year of the new party's first presidential campaign, this passage resembles a campaign poem, Jerome A. Mabey's "A Republican Lyric." It is unlikely that Whitman or Mabey had read each other's work; the sentiment both express was a common one throughout various kinds of Republican appeals,[2] but the variation between these two iterations is suggestive nonetheless:

> Those fields are your own—a treasure sublime—
> To be nobly enjoy'd in your own living time;
> Those fields are your own—to be kept as a trust
> For your own coming selves—yet sleeping in dust![3]

Both works hinge on a paradox, approached in each from a slightly different angle. In Mabey's poem, the fields are ready to be enjoyed in the pursuit of the individual economic and social interest of the single laborer, while also being kept in trust by that same laborer and, through him, by the class and

by the nation, for future generations. As a way of defamiliarizing the trustee role of any owner of land, the poem employs various devices (anaphora, for instance) to artificially distinguish between the two roles only in order to bind them more closely together at another level. Set in balance with each other are not ownership and preservation, but enjoyment and keeping. In the very act of being cultivated, the fields are kept as a trust; and the future generations, named more obliquely than in Whitman's tract, similarly come to fruition—conflated with the present workers as "your own coming selves . . . yet sleeping in dust!" The workers are restored as the true agents of a self-procreating history in the mutually implied activities of tilling the land and extending themselves spatially, temporally, and imaginatively. They entail the land in the act of performing on it; they ensure their genealogical continuity by throwing themselves into the task immediately before them. The daily activities proper to their social position make them founders of a dynasty.

Whereas Mabey's quatrain projects into the future while pointedly emphasizing the efforts of the present ("your own living time"), Whitman's assertion denarrativizes the process, as if it were independent of any action, while still highlighting through syntactical repetitions the intimate relationship between the land's belonging to the workers and resting in trust with them. The future generations appear not as a realization of the worker acting upon the world but merely as the later owners of the gloriously developed communities that already lie latent in the fields. If claimed now by a trustee who is true, the homesteads will become "inalienable." Whitman plants the future directly in the soil of the present.

The point here is not that Whitman is somehow modifying and repurposing a common political antislavery trope—quite the opposite. Each prophecy is implicit in the other. Mabey's call for the workers to enjoy what belongs to them as the only means of realizing themselves in history comes out in Whitman's passage in the very act of demanding nothing from the workers but the courage to assert their claim. Whitman is staking his prophecy on the coming of the "real America" that has been kept in check by the same forces that would rob the laborers of their patrimony. While Mabey's poem urges the people to realize themselves in work that will stretch out a line of genealogical continuity, Whitman's passage simply urges them to take possession of what is already theirs in the act of political recuperation, which will itself keep national spaces latent with the future. Both passages belong

to a more complex Republican rhetorical universe, where true ownership of one's labor is bound up in advance with the interlocking consequences and conditions of that ownership: the people's mastery over the present political system that claims to represent them; the people's prior but unrealized ownership of a West that is already constituted by their occupation (in many senses of the word); and, most importantly, the people's property in the historical future.

The 1856 and 1860 editions of *Leaves of Grass* stage this historical trajectory as a story of the speaker's coming to consciousness of it and then inhabiting it in his own voice. And he does that largely through a reflection on labor as an actor in history that is at once highly conventional and groundbreaking in its contributions to the tradition. The elisions in the speaker's prophecy in *The Eighteenth Presidency!* rematerialize in the poem's account of a broader generative process, whose chief instrument is labor. In this account, Whitman insinuates the culture's nonpartisan celebration of labor into the party antislavery universe, where free labor can come into its world historical role only through the political conquest of its natural and nightmarishly resurgent historical enemy. Like his new party, Whitman borrows the rhetorical figure of the challenge by which laborers had been interpellated by party discourse for a generation in recognition of their rising cultural currency, if not actual social status. That much his party itself was accomplishing. *Leaves of Grass* goes further in tracing out a historical trajectory where the land is already constituted by an agency that he invokes, where the terms of the party challenge are already encoded within the workers' coming into themselves, and where the people need only ensure a line of descent that guarantees their sovereignty through that historical medium.

Why, first of all, did the Republican party need such an elaborate prophetic machinery to support what the expansion into the West would seem to make a simple practical matter of entitlement? The free land and homestead movements certainly presented a similar argument that the laborer had a claim to available land by virtue of his labor alone,[4] but party antislavery was operating within a different disputative realm, which required reframing the right to the land as a service to a national mission. To discern that realm in

Whitman's and Mabey's idealized line of succession, one must turn to how the battle over the settlement of the territories by Northern freemen and Southern slaveowners worked itself out as competing claims for sectional equity. For in this particularly starry-eyed Republican trope we find the party doing part of the work to dispel the aura of inclusive mutuality that seemed to belong to the other side—to seize the flag of nationality that the Republican party's opponents so proudly waved when they sought to discredit and stigmatize core political antislavery principles.

When Northern conservatives did not offer increasingly unsupportable reassurances that the territories would end up free through the natural course of events, they somewhat uncomfortably presented a defense of the right of Southerners to take their slaves as chattel into the territories on the grounds of equality, not only of states but also of citizens. In a typical formulation, an 1860 Democratic paper asserted that "the south are the sharers with the North in this great inheritance of Empire and that it belongs equally to them and to us."[5] If a Northerner could bring his goods into the territories when settling there, then a Southerner must be afforded the same right, according to the principle of a common national standard. Republicans, of course, objected to false equivalence between different kinds of "property" posited by this formulation. They also, however, had to degeographize their own universal criterion so that no "specious pretence of comity," in the phrase of a Republican propaganda sheet, could discredit it.[6] To accomplish that task, they invested the labor power of the individual settler with a national and historical efficacy that broke down the distinction between sections and undermined the vision of Americans from diverse social systems simply carrying those systems over to the newly settled West.

Republicans undercut the fallacy of equal access for all citizens in the territories by endlessly reiterating the point that Whitman also makes in *The Eighteenth Presidency!*—that the mere presence of slavery in a territory degraded labor both economically and culturally and thus in and of itself deprived the free settler of the true benefit of the land.[7] Some historians and Whitman scholars, most notably Martin Klammer,[8] have emphasized the racial element of this appeal, because the fear of the degradation of labor rested in part on the distinction between the free white laborer and the black slave.[9] As even historians who deemphasize it concede, race was undoubtedly a component of the Free Soil appeal, but the political antislavery obsession

with the degradation of labor can also be explained by the fear of a resurgent hierarchy that Whitman expresses in *The Eighteenth Presidency!*

The free laborer's immediate loss of cultural capital in the territories reflected a more gradual national process reversing the gains achieved on that score. The territories were the site where the long-term threat to the rights and interests of free labor in the nation did its work quickly enough to be immediately visible: what required the gradual insinuation of unrepublican standards into the political and cultural practices in the free states would be accomplished in an instant when the free laborer would find the redemptive power of his work devalued and incapacitated by the slave labor around him. The political antislavery movement drove this belief home by framing the degradation of labor in the territories as if it were a personal slight, always threatened by a recalcitrant aristocratic system in the free states: "The slaveholder must be allowed to go into the territories with his property no matter of what kind. The working man of the North cannot go there with his personal dignity and self-respect. Is this equality?"[10] This passage's pointed emphasis on the worker's "personal dignity and self-respect," rather than on more immediate practical consequences, will become a key pivot upon which Whitman's poetic interventions turn.

To Republicans, the same paradox that Whitman found in *The Eighteenth Presidency!*—that the very nation that had charted a path of progress to the world would itself devolve—was acted out in the territories' drama of exclusion. Those lands were meant to be the antithesis, negation, antidote, and solution to the worldwide tendency to revert to despotism; they were the stage upon which the nation would succeed or fail in presenting a counterhistory to European paths of development. According to leading Republican polemicist Parke Godwin, in the territories the rubrics of the past were to be "written over" by "an ever-maturing nobleness and grandeur" in a land unsullied by humanity's history of enslavement. Given this promise, it seemed particularly apt that the West could take in the refugees from Europe's recent failed attempt at its own redemption, the revolutions of 1848; the territories would offer a home for "the outcast republicans of Europe, and for a new and grander display of the beneficent influence of republicanism."[11] America would nurture a fresh space for what a decadent Europe could not sustain in more than short bursts. In a virtuous circle, a revived republicanism, through a respected nationality-neutral labor, enlivens the very field that has given

it a fresh opportunity: as a paper about to turn Republican also put it, "the downtrodden laborers of other countries," "invited without distinction," will "occupy and enliven" the prairies' "vast and silent surfaces."[12]

According to Godwin, this blossoming of historical potential in the fertile West ends the moment slavery is introduced: "the fields seem to wither at its approach."[13] All at once, free labor, now trapped in that environment, loses the cultivating potential Mabey and Whitman identified as its essential attribute. Indeed, Godwin's prediction of an automatic retrogression blighting the very fields is the mirror image of that antislavery prophecy. Republicans, in representing the territories as the final arena for the cause of human equality, were obsessed with the sequential interfolding and mutual undermining of those two inverted fates. Always the same paradox operated: the new settler, especially the European immigrant, was given a field untouched by those European corruptions that had already begun to infest the eastern states, only to be confronted with a demonic New World apotheosis of European despotism. As one regretful apostrophe to the immigrant put it, "We send you to the West where slavery is more debasing than that from which you fled."[14] "The choicest heritage of the free laborers of the United States"[15] becomes instead an ancestral curse from which there is no escape. A West infested with slavery is the figure for the free laborer's dispossession and disinheritance on the larger stage of history.

Yet much more was at stake in the Republican warning of slavery's degrading effect on labor than the interests of a certain class. By the 1850s, the possibility that republicanism could survive the unavoidable degradations that the mere passage of time wrought had come to be seen as bound up with the vindication of labor's dignity. Recently the historian Eva Sheppard Wolf has examined the antecedents to this view, demonstrating how in the fifty years following the Revolution, before "free-labor thought became standardized as an ideology," writers slowly began to "link free labor to republicanism" and accordingly "champion[ed] the dignity of that labor,"[16] In both the second and third party systems, that association made its way into party affirmations. In his very acceptance of the new party's nomination, Fremont rested his prescriptions for the territories on the definition of "Free Labor" as "the natural capital which constitutes the real wealth of this great country and creates that intelligent power in the masses, alone to be relied on as the bulwark of free institutions."[17] There is a long lineage to this affirmation—both within and outside the party system.

Since the 1830s, Democrats had regularly designated labor the "real producer of wealth," had vowed to protect "the poor man's only wealth,"[18] and had countered conservative warnings against their party's radicalism by pinpointing the key property right deserving the protection of national policy as property in the fruits of one's own labor (anticipating political antislavery arguments about the territories).[19] So too the Whigs, with the greater store they set by economic progress per se, hailed free labor as "one of the great elements of prosperity in the country" because of its creative power to produce what is needed to "sustain the great fabric of Government."[20] Outside the party system, American self-representations increasingly came to see the mission of America not simply as vindicating republicanism but specifically as elevating labor.[21] That elevation was seen less as an extension of human rights than as an attempt to acknowledge and systematize the kind of cooperation lying at the source of the nation's momentum. As Orville Dewey's widely reproduced "The Nobility of Labor" put it in Whitman's youth, "Heaven's great ordinance for human improvement" providentially marshals discrete acts that are the regular duty of the individual into the fulfillment of a collective destiny. But to fully benefit from this involuntary virtuous circle, the cultural impediments to it must be consciously eschewed: echoing thousands of similar appeals, Dewey reduced this release to a simple formula—"it is time that this opprobrium of toil were done away."[22]

The dominant culture's project of destigmatization must be distinguished from the developments that two historians, Sean Wilentz and, more recently, Alex Gourevitch, have examined: the efforts of the labor movement itself to broaden the contours of republicanism so that it validated the steps that movement was beginning to make toward collective action. Nevertheless, the mechanisms of definitional expansion, which these two historians examine, shed light on the reevaluation that is central both to antislavery ideology and to Whitman's own valorizations. Both historians show how a discourse so pervasive as to be virtually undisputed altered as it worked its way through the struggles of different groups to lay claim to its privileges and obligations. Wilentz shows how "the versions of American republicanism multiplied, as men of different backgrounds and conflicting social views . . . came to judge themselves and each other by their adduced adherence to republican principles." A "superficial consensus" set the terms for a rhetorical competition in which the ultimate ends varied.[23] Gourevitch describes this cultural

work, mostly in the postbellum period, as an "attempt to universalize the language of republican liberty" and to appropriate "the inherited concepts of independence and virtue."[24] Such universalizing was also taken up earlier within the wider political culture in the free states. That project took the basic categories of republican thought—independence, virtue, and power—and began to apply them in ways that ascribed a prophetic function to labor. This new representation of the workers' contribution to progress widened the scope of republican liberty in ways that were susceptible to being absorbed into party discourse.

The universality of labor reconciles self-interest and citizenship, with private exertions first reinforcing the private solidarity of domestic ties and then circling around to a common republican purpose: "The true theory of the dignity of labor is that every man belongs to some other, and all belong to each other, that all are alike interested in Labor and its results."[25] This conceit ran throughout the respectable tributes to labor's power that saturated the culture of the free states: the most basic self-interest of survival embedded in the act of labor blossoms out toward an understanding that "the brotherhood of man" is "the true national Themis, breaking down false distinctions."[26] As the historian Eva Sheppard Wolf concludes, labor was celebrated in order to "link free labor to republicanism" and to see individual acts of labor as making up a system that would "impart to those who internalized its tenets a positive sense of self and community."[27] Under this construction, the association between an individual property owner's virtue and the health of the state that undergirded an older model of republican thought found a new actor to carry the nation uncorrupted through the natural degradations of history—one with the impulse of development and improvement built into its very mode of action, the very concrete practices that characterize it.[28]

The political antislavery warning that these developments would be thwarted, and indeed nullified, in the territories owes a great deal to this redefinition of republican progress and the calls for a readjustment of social values that accompanied it. For good reason, then, historians of the party movement have done more than describe the role of an idealized free labor in Republican ideology; they have traced that ideology back to the changing economic and cultural conditions that can also be felt in Whitman's own work. Whitman himself, more than any other leading literary figure of the period, took part in the discursive practices that these historians described;

so before his interventions can be fully enlisted for an interpretation of *Leaves of Grass*, they must be contextualized in the ideological landscape charted by these historians. On that landscape lies the common stake that party discourse and Whitman's poems had in idealizing labor.

In his canonical study *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, the historian Eric Foner changed how we view the ideology of the Republican party by demonstrating that its opposition to slavery was built upon its glorification of the Northern economic system. In other words, for the first time a historian showed that antislavery as expressed in party was a true ideology in the Marxist sense—one springing out of the material base in which it flourishes—not just a set of humanitarian beliefs or a self-interested rebellion. Carrying through on that breakthrough, the historian John Ashworth has shown that opposition to slavery emerged only when the economic and hence cultural conditions of Northern society had developed in such a way as to release wage labor from the stigma of degradation, which had blurred the distinction between the Southern and Northern systems. Like Foner, Ashworth puts at the center not the slave system itself but the North's ideological reassessment of what had just recently come to be regarded as a free labor system. When seen through this celebration of the burgeoning Northern mode of production, slavery appeared in a particularly unfavorable light; the two systems came to take on a definition from the development of a clear contrast between them that cultural representations in the free states constantly reinforced.

The two historians, especially Foner, also show that the shift toward a new ground for celebrating free labor was not perfectly reflective of the changes in the economy or of the shift toward wage labor, and that analysis is particularly relevant to our consideration of Whitman's own glorifications. A cultural lag resulted in the rhetoric of labor resting on the archaic premise that the free laborer owned the tools of production and was the urban equivalent of the hardy yeoman farmer of Jefferson's imagination. As Foner put it in 1995, "the ideology of free labor would emerge, in part, from this vision of America as a producer's republic."[29] Rather than abandon that ideal in a radical break toward an uncompromising glorification of wage labor on its own terms, the culture assimilated wage earners "into the republic of property holders."[30] As

we have already seen in the representation of the territories, the definition of property lent itself to this rhetorical readjustment, including in its range literal physical property and a Lockean property in the self.

A collective nostalgia for an earlier ideal also entered into this matrix of beliefs, a nostalgia all the more incongruous given the rumblings of more modern labor disputes heard in the 1850s. (Some critics and historians, however, have noted that, whatever the long-term trends, much labor in the 1850s in fact remained artisanal or craft work.[31]) These developments certainly threatened both Whitman's and the free labor culture's ideals, but that threat made all the more inviting the prospect of harnessing the old ideal to a model for the laborer's power. Like his party's, Whitman's hanging on to an outdated ideal opened up new avenues for the contrast with slavery that will be key to his accomplishment in *Leaves of Grass*. This development was anticipated when Whitman played the unambiguous role of a polemicist in the late 1840s.

One of the Free Soil editorials Whitman managed to see published in the *Brooklyn Eagle*—shortly before being fired for that advocacy—has received careful consideration in Whitman criticism: Martin Klammer's insights into it will be examined later in a different context. Most relevant here is the editorial's pointed definition of Northern labor that facilitates a model for political resistance to the demands of slavery. First, the editorial shows Whitman's investment in the new assumption that the free laborer was exempt from the dependence that had stigmatized manual work for centuries. Slavery, he claims, is "destructive to the dignity and independence of all who work." That independence rests on the fact that in the free states the worker is not dependent on being employed by others, "each man as a general thing being his own workman."[32] "As a general thing," of course, is somewhat evasive, but, hedging or not, Whitman's description hardly seems in keeping with the recent destigmatizing of specifically wage labor that so many historians have charted. For good reason, then, the critic M. Wynn Thomas has charged Whitman with being captive to an outmoded Jacksonian belief system that no longer reflected the conditions of the day. Following up on Thomas's analysis, Andrew Lawson sees the persistence of these views in Whitman's writing over the years to be indicative of the tensions that arise in Whitman's "determination to hold on to an essentially agrarian, lower middle-class-outlook in an urban industrial context."[33] This determination

can be approached from a variety of perspectives, but when it is viewed specifically as a function of drawing upon idealized party representations, it loses some of its evasive qualities and appears more an amplification of an available rhetorical resource. As Marx famously noted at the beginning of *The Eighteenth Brumaire* in connection to far more extreme cases of historical anachronisms, the invocation of an archaic language properly belonging to long past struggles can become a tool for revolutionary change thanks to, not in spite of, the imaginary conditions it invokes. The rest of Whitman's editorial shows that the political antislavery movement embraced this anachronistic ideal partly in order to extend, analogically, what it represented as labor's inherent powers into the political realm.

That latter part of the editorial is also the place where Whitman anticipated, in different ways, both *The Eighteenth Presidency!* and *Leaves of Grass*, not to mention Fremont's letter accepting the presidential nomination: he describes farmers as a "prolific brood of brown faced fathers and sons who swarm over the free states, and form the true bulwark of our republic, mightier than walls or armies" and then calls "upon them . . . to say whether *they* too will exist 'free and independent' not only in name but also by those social customs and laws which are greater than constitutions—or only so by statute, while in reality they are put down to an equality with slaves!"[34] Here Whitman takes the key analogical step of political antislavery discourse, that is, seeing the degradation of labor not solely as an effect of a certain policy in the territories, not solely as a cultural product of a shameful intermingling with slave labor, but as an outcome in the present moment of the refusal to avert those eventualities through political assertion. When Whitman calls "upon [workers] to say," he envisages a decision whose long-term elevating consequences are mimicked and anticipated in the act of will that ensures that outcome. By implication, if workers refuse to adumbrate their own future dignity in their present acts, they have already "put [themselves] down to an equality with slaves."

If the people could make this choice to devolve in their status, the cultural project to affirm the dignity of labor was in danger of being overturned just as it was poised to break out in action. That such weight could possibly be put on something so far removed from cultural status as a voting choice is partly a function of what Foner has examined: how the work of party helped to consolidate, institutionalize, and extend the cultural capital of the worker

by demanding his participation. Once "political virtue was not confined to property holders," the same requirements that had traditionally been put on higher classes to verify and reproduce their economic independence in the realm of their political participation could now be applied to the worker. Part of the celebration of the laborer was a celebration of his independence. As early as 1824, parties would claim that the ballot box "makes us what we should be, independent, and removed from the influence of pampered wealth."[35]

Adopting this view is one of the many ways in which political antislavery, far from watering down the abolitionist critique, could infuse it with a unique potency by wedding it to the rhetoric of party allegiance as cultural self-affirmation. The very availability of this model for the assertion of class dignity through political acts opened up new possibilities for the antislavery appeal. Labor was much more intimately bound up with the slavery controversy than it had previously been with the disputes between Whigs and Democrats; as a result, the movement could use the dynamics of party competition to fill out their analogical system whereby the people symbolically enact in the present moment their long-term fate.

Indeed, party appeals were the discursive arena where the new dignity theoretically assigned to labor made its way to a practical charge assigned to the worker as the vessel of this new status. The rhetoric of challenge, a common mode of party discourse under a variety of circumstances, took an especially prominent role when addressing workers. Historians and political scientists have shown how the language of republican liberty and political independence had always relied on chattel slavery as a foil to set those characteristics apart as sociologically and historically distinct. It is, therefore, less a case of borrowing than one of organic resurgence when Whitman and the political antislavery movement picked up, for their injunction about the territories, the earlier second party system's appeal to the workers. In the following example from the second party system, the context is explicitly the purported conservative belief in the workers' failure to have risen in their dignity beyond servile dependence, and the appeal calls for the workers to refute that insult through their political choice: "What say you workingmen—Will you suffer this party to make you, what they already call you, LESS independent than slaves, or will you show by your acts, your independence of the moneyed power?"[36] The Liberty party, not surprisingly, applied this challenge specifically to the insult from slaveholders: "Speak,

farmers, mechanics and laborers of free Ohio!" lest you be "degraded in your own self-esteem."[37]

In the 1856 campaign, this harnessing of a broad cultural imperative to a specific political appeal bore rich rhetorical fruit in the glorification of the worker's voice: his word alone can end the insult to his dignity, whose ultimate consequence is the spread of slavery over the nation's domain. Thus, in a frequently republished poem for the 1856 Republican campaign, "Men of Labor," the typical challenge to the worker is shortened in the invocation "yours to say." This standard party rhetorical device amounts to something more than a flourish in "Men of Labor"; it turns into a refrain whose resonance depends upon another reiterated word that the poem consistently attaches to slavery's encroachments—"further."[38] That word conveys the poem's spatial metaphor for slavery as a distant force on the march, as a cultural principle in danger of insinuating itself into a social system ostensibly immune to it, and as a political usurper positioned to overrun the worker's gains in status and authority. The worker's voice alone can repel this invading force. It will either absorb the impact of the threat and thus accede to it or ward it off with a magical incantation—hence "yours to say." The freedom of the territories will rest less on government policy than on the laborers' willingness to emit from their very authentic mode of being the collective will that alone can ensure that freedom.

Both *Leaves of Grass* and *The Eighteenth Presidency!* follow through on Whitman the editor's prophecy of labor rising to the challenge presented by the national crisis over the territories. "The prolific brood" of the editorial becomes, in *The Eighteenth Presidency!*, a new race that "copiously appears"[39] through the mists of the speaker's bewilderment and seems on the brink of driving out the occupying force of the compromisers. In *Leaves of Grass* such a figure also makes regular appearances, but that text tells the story of labor as the active force in the nation's redemption differently. What party antislavery packs into a single act of sovereignty, whose mere exercise ends misrule and realizes labor's dignity, *Leaves of Grass* both further condenses in an instantaneous recognition and stretches out over a vast span of time. The poetry cycle reconstructs progress as labor gradually usurping the other instruments of sovereignty whose mediations had governed world history—laborers at once enabling and reflecting that development in an internal reevaluation of their power. That process culminates in a new agent,

the laborer, whose only duty is to be itself and whose cumulative selfhood must, through its own momentum, produce the single act of authority that political antislavery pinpointed as the duty laboring men could not elude if they were to secure their status. In that way, Whitman places into a broader historical trajectory the challenge to the worker that had for decades been a staple of party discourse. Although the challenge survives and still hinges on political choice, it evolves into a challenge for the workers not just to affirm their dignity but to realize in the moment the long-term progress that has come to constitute them.

In the antebellum editions, the two poems celebrating workers—in some ways the most traditional poems in the cycle—contribute to a newly resurgent subgenre: the labor poem, increasingly widespread in the two decades before *Leaves of Grass* appeared. The labor poem's ubiquity seems partly due to the cultural mission it served, that is, aligning traditional celebrations of workers with the ideological shift that had assigned a new position to labor in the spectrum of dependence and independence, of deference and self-sovereignty. With its "Proto-Leaf" introducing the entire cycle, the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, in particular, announces its generic affiliations when the speaker, in one of those gestures to the epic tradition that many critics have examined, sets down his task as singing the "heroism" of "employments" (1860, 10).[40] Though such celebrations go back to the classical period, Whitman's owe more to a burgeoning American tradition of more recent provenance.[41]

In Whitman's labor poems the critic Alan Trachtenberg finds "a literary figure, [a] trope of possibility,"[42] and the contours of that figure had been sketched out by his predecessors—the popular poems celebrating work as both the fruit and the instrument of the personal qualities that enter into its performance. Resistance, fortitude, pride, will, and acceptance join together through that literary figure as the foundation for the new status and self-image the poems seek to give the worker. Whitman contributes to that tradition in an unexpected way: in his poems, those attributes are abstracted from, rather than bound to, concrete daily material practices. Free from that context, they can be concentrated as a transpersonal historical force. Seen as history's prime mover, this force recasts labor in the nation's development;

no longer a vague architect of a republican future, it assumes a distinctive agency grounded in a new consciousness of the antecedents and emanations that inhere in its present being.

The rhetoric of challenge that in the political antislavery appeal is directed toward action aims its admonition at a wider target in the labor poems, namely the laborer's self-image and self-regard before they are manifested in deeds. The poem "Poem of the Daily Work of the Workmen and Workwomen of These States," later entitled "A Song for Occupations," in its early stages also adopts that strategy. The entire poem, appearing in all three antebellum editions but given a title only in 1856, is an address to the "workingmen and workingwomen" of that 1856 title, and the speaker urges them to recognize their equal standing with those who conventionally would be considered their superiors:

> Why what have you thought of yourself?
> Is it you, then, that thought yourself less?
> Is it you that thought the President greater than
> you? or the rich better off than you? or the
> educated wiser than you? (1856, 123)

Familiar as this premise might be in party antislavery, the overt upbraiding questions here convey an attitude indistinguishable from that found in numerous apolitical labor poems. Most of those poems also address a hypothetical laborer, whom they admonish not to let the lazy acceptance of fashion's artificial standards undermine his or her own self-regard. And Whitman follows these poems by mildly chiding the workers for having internalized hierarchical principles and hence reproduced them in the broader culture. In most labor poems, this rebuke reflects an instructional posture toward those addressed that is in turn facilitated by the speaker's stance as a disembodied voice with no personal stake in the lifting of this cultural burden. In William D. Gallagher's "The Labourer," for instance, an interjection marks the speaker's directive that the worker himself should recognize the equal status he can then expect to find acknowledged from the world:

> Thou art thyself thine enemy!
> The great!—what better they than thou! . . .
> Thou art the peer of any man.[43]

As conventional in its exclamatory tone as in its sentiment, this passage recalibrates social values along lines not far distant from Whitman's. What makes Whitman's poem distinctive is his stance as a speaker toward his addressees; he abjures the tone of disembodied authority that is most typical in such poems in favour of an urgent and passionate relationship—his poem begins "come closer to me" (121).

Though such invocations are hardly unusual in *Leaves of Grass*, rarely is Whitman's speaker more insistent than in these opening verse paragraphs on establishing an interaction with those he apostrophizes more intimate and personal than the subject matter would seem to require. His voice thereby confirms at the level of the presentation what he demands, strengthening the plea for equality that in more traditional labor poems seems compromised by something close to an aura of patronizing reassurance. Even when Whitman's speaker calls the worker "you foolish child" (130), it is a lover's term of endearment, not a superior's judgment. The speaker will in one way grant benefits to those he addresses, but it will not be the benefits of mere disciplined and obligatory self-esteem with which he begins. Whitman seems to make an indirect allusion to the typical voice of the labor poem or prose tribute when he renounces the mediation of the print types and of the class position that seems to accompany them, the "educations, practical and ornamental," that promise to be "displayed out of me" (121). Whitman's speaker struggles to avoid reproducing, in the mere material and social conditions of literary production, the paternalism that the labor poems reject in their abstract principles while at the same time reproducing it in their tone.

Evading that trap keeps the speaker in the posture of one struggling to sustain the circuit of exchange between him and the worker. Because the speaker is "neither a servant nor a master" (122), he rules out extracting the value of service or patronage from the worker that would delimit the range of benefits each could acquire from the other. In this way, the poem goes beyond simply ignoring the relations of production that frame acts of labor in the real world—a common evasion in the period's labor poems—to banishing them officially from his own representations even for their analogical possibilities. Only once free of this overshadowing model can the exchange remain circular in its odd mutuality. After listing the various types he is addressing, he assumes the duty to "offer no representative of value, but offer the value itself." The next verse paragraph returns the poem to the spatial

polarity that defines his stance—nearness vs. distance—to name this value as "something that comes home to one now and perpetually." Here the poem recasts the ideal of proximity in the labor poem: in that tradition, most commonly the worker is urged to see the workplace itself as his kingdom, where no usurper could compromise his governance. At first, Whitman's speaker seems to echo that tradition in celebrating what is near, but it turns out that what "comes home to one now" is only "hinted" by "nearest, commonest, readiest—it is not them, though it is endlessly provoked by them" (125). The 1855 edition, by assigning a more climactic position to the call for the workers not to stray to "another place" (1855, 64), seems to flirt with the traditional admonition; however, even in that edition "this place" has, by the concluding verse paragraphs, become indistinguishable from the labor-power whose essence the speaker seeks—the "there with you and here with me" described earlier (61)—thus mitigating the implication that the workers should not venture outside their own domain. The 1856 and 1860 versions of the poem more definitively (as we shall see later when considering the added verse paragraphs) urge their addressee not to turn inward to the workshop but to join the speaker in locating the force common and essential to the various manifestations of work for use in the world. Only then can the worker and the speaker touch.

If the value makes up the very atmosphere of the workers, to which the speaker constantly urges them to return, how is it a boon that the speaker bestows? He confers it on them negatively, by barring from their sight the mediating gifts that could obscure the workers' ownership of their own power through the illusion of distance: he returns it as something both lost again and retrieved in his act of writing, requiring the delicate stipulations of his appeal. His posture requires the same proximity he asks the workers to maintain with their world, and within those confines he experiences that intimate connection with the world before him that *The Eighteenth Presidency!* can identify only in its absence. Ultimately in the poem, the speaker credits his lovers with the perspectival value he would first bestow; with this alignment attained, he can transmit to the republic what they already have at hand.

In two of the most detailed readings of the poem in its later iteration as "A Song for Occupations," the critics Alan Trachtenberg and Margaret Ronda find in this emphasis on exchange the key to the poem's political purpose. Both critics, in different ways, take the poem as responding to what Ronda

calls "capital's transformations in valorizations"[44]—by idealizing them, according to Trachtenberg, and by questioning them, according to Ronda. In Ronda's discussion of the relationship between speaker and addressee, she claims that the speaker establishes an "elemental similitude" that is at odds with "transactions centred on wages and the mediations of human relations via 'price.'" The speaker's "unconditional validation of the addressee" will "eschew all forms of social measurement." In Trachtenberg's analysis, "the poet's own work provides the exemplary model" for returning occupations "to living praxis," and the venue for the exchanges the speaker describes becomes an instrument of transfer that replaces, even as it reflects, the new market relations, which were beginning to institutionalize professions according to their own logic: "his supreme fiction of an autonomous self whose essential labor is the exchange of creative being with others. It is this figure, his 'one's self,' who tallies America with democracy, performs the conversion of each into the other."[45]

Both critics, then, have demonstrated how the relationship between speaker and worker must be viewed as constituting, not just reinforcing or communicating, what the poem claims about labor's production of the world. The argument offered here is restricted to the three antebellum editions and therefore disregards later revisions, which seem to reflect postwar economic changes. It is therefore closer to M. Wynn Thomas's approach to the poem as a "mid-century attempt to infuse the spirit of the old departed world into the different—and possibly opposite—character of the new America."[46] In the reading offered here, "the exchange of creative being with others" that Trachtenberg emphasizes will be considered the vehicle by which the poem accelerates the cultural work of broadening the perimeters of the republican model until it includes the laborer as a self-possessed agent within the political universe.

Whitman sharpens the terms of his communicative inclusion so as to reflect the purpose of party discourse's challenge to the laborer, even while dissolving the actual rhetorical framework and narrative sequence of the challenge. The speaker, in his assertions of equality with the worker, relinquishes in one stroke the supervisory position of the typical labor celebration and takes on himself the responsibility assigned to the worker in the party appeal to confirm the workingman's honor. The poem becomes a drama of his own struggle to grasp and take in the knowledge of what the laborer

has already produced in the world—and through this effort of perception the worker is left holding a free title to a world where ownership alone assures independence. Whitman takes to its logical conclusion the republican model's association of property and political responsibility by insisting that the workers' sovereignty is represented as already achieved in the world's fashioning. The worker needn't be prodded into exercising it; that figure need only stand within that realm of the constituted world for sovereignty to operate by its own momentum and logic. The speaker can appeal as a lover rather than manipulate as a stern mentor. In cutting through the mediations that have obscured the genealogy of the world, in tracing the world back to the worker, the speaker reaches the point where he can affirm in his own triumph the end of the political mediations that circumscribe the worker's power in *The Eighteenth Presidency!*

Here again, Whitman departs from the tradition of labor poetry in order to make the genre the vessel for a more radical expectation from the workers he addresses. The poem lingers in the present to find the home of its productions instead of projecting into a future, where the cumulative work that the labor poem celebrates is seen blooming through no particular medium into a greater republican future. The pallid call for the workers to sustain and invigorate republicanism in such poems (for instance, Isaac Shepard's "A Song to Labor"[47]) becomes in Whitman's text a more pained struggle to reduce to its essential component the power that goes into their work and hence to make it available for the speaker's own perspectival struggle. Time itself becomes one of the mediations that distance the workers from their own authority, and the speaker therefore eschews a vague faith in progress. The speaker must redirect his own perception to the workers themselves while ensuring that they carry it over to an expression in the outside world. The political realm becomes the point of transit for this double consciousness.

The speaker's distinctive stance, then, finally can be explained by the other feature that makes Whitman's opening admonition to those he addresses untraditional: the comparison specifically with the president, who will become within the poem more than simply the pinnacle of attainment within a republic. Whitman's recurring references to a hypothetical president occur in the space where the two rhetorical traditions that are joined by the poem intertangle—the assertion of equality of the relatively apolitical labor poems and the confrontational test of political authority that belongs

to party discourse, which concerned itself with an abstract equality only insofar as its neglect might feed the instinct to defer to others in the nation's decision-making process. The president's regular reappearances anticipate the final moment of confrontation and thus give a kind of narrative ballast to the poem's long riddles, catalogs, and celebrations. This figure is first put on the same level with the worker, is then seen as an emanation of the worker, and finally is positioned opposite the worker. It is as if the poem were geared to this final moment that realizes and confirms, in one instant, the republican efficacy that the speaker hopes he can seduce the worker into recognizing. Before charting the later appearances of the president, one must consider Whitman's other departures from the stance of the typical labor poem's speaker.

Though it is eventually entitled "A Song for Occupations," the poem does not catalog the workers in the same way Whittier does, for instance, in his *Songs of Labor* or, indeed, as Whitman himself does elsewhere in *Leaves of Grass*. His catalog is not of the workers in their individual pursuits but of what labor has produced; and it never breaks free from the rhetorical or even syntactic framework that assigns it that specific polemical function. The celebration of the products of work remains throughout caught within the address to the workers, which urges them to keep their sights trained on the world that has "exurged" from their own acts of labor. This tribute to what labor has produced, while certainly not the most common theme of the period's labor poetry, emerged on occasion: "by the sweat of my brow your proud cities are laid."[48] Whitman goes beyond this motif by rejecting the distinction between the products of work and what would usually be seen as the products of civilization—the Union, music, the president's message all ascend to the same level. As a result, the worker's labor power becomes universalized, and Whitman can avoid the route taken in the traditional labor poetry to achieve the same end: the emphasis on making a new world through the struggle involved in surviving the present one. In those poems, what begins as necessity ends as a freedom of will that bestows a well-disguised magical power on the act of work. In his demand that the workers join him in identifying the unnameable value they embody, the speaker excludes the immediate benefit of the work as rigorously as he does its long-term effect of fortifying class distinctions. The first stage is as mystifying as the last:

Have you reckoned them ["the wonders that fill each minute of time"]
for a trade or farm-work?
or for the profits of a store? or to achieve
yourself a position? or to fill a gentleman's
leisure, or a lady's leisure? (1856, 127)

Whitman passes over even the earliest stage in the translation of individual will into benefit so that the will can remain within the worker himself as an attribute not so much practised on the world as more and more deeply inhering in the self while the workers recognize what stands before them. The retrospective point of view makes the workers' coming to consciousness of what they have wrought a fulfillment of the process that began with their individual exertion.

It is as if Whitman were deferring the process of redemption, which the labor poems locate in the construction of a new world, however gradual and arduous. In Whittier's "The Lumbermen," the worker must endure every individual exertion because cumulatively they regenerate the world and restore republicanism, and such confidence must inspire him as he makes that contribution: "Strike! With every blow is given / Freer sun and sky."[49] Whitman's poem has no such interest in directing the action of labor itself to republican ends. The worker is already the republican model's ideal figure of the independent property owner par excellence. By the time Whitman finishes his catalog of what the worker has produced and moves into the present, the worker has been equipped, courtesy of the speaker, with the powers that went into the genealogy of the world. On that basis, the workers can recognize as of their own fashioning the stage upon which they now must act.

For all the abstractions by which Whitman evades the acts of labor themselves, his poem is much more concrete in sketching the dimensions of the world that he has created and must not now allow to rule over him:

The sum of all known reverence I add up in you,
whoever you are,
The President is there in the White House for
you, it is not you who are here for him. (1856, 128)

In an instant, the theoretical relation between civilization and those who have produced it becomes a direct matter of political representation; and the

problem of delegated authority, which vexes the speaker in *The Eighteenth Presidency!*, is here solved at a single stroke: the same reevaluation that reads the world as an expression of labor reorders the political chain of command. Cleaving to the world as a product of labor, by definition, hands its reins over to its maker. The poem at this point has not yet completely drawn the nexus between understanding and sovereignty, however; this passage precedes rather than follows the list of objects that the poem goes on to insist that the worker must not seek to transcend or traverse. Only with those recognized as also excreted from labor can the poem work itself up to the charge of political self-ownership proffered by party discourse. This is accomplished through one of the poem's many rhetorical subterfuges (another from this poem will be examined in chapter 5), where assertions first take on the complexion of quietistic platitudes and then immediately flip over to expose their democratic underbelly.

This turn does not appear in the original 1855 version of the poem but is added in the 1856 edition. The addition has more than a local effect; it makes the earlier parts of the poem seem a foundation for that moment. It also brings out what is merely implicit in the lines leading immediately up to it, which also appear in the 1855 edition. Those lines common to the two editions will therefore be considered here first. By this part of the poem, it seems that the worker has assimilated the consciousness of his own procreative power that the speaker has conferred on him. The worker has taken "the best" that the speaker promises in the poem's opening lines and now can make good on them. That success creates a paradoxical position for him: the closer the worker confines himself to the world he has created and lays aside any goal established by the culture beyond it, the more he gains a public authority. The poem has already prevented this passage from being mistaken for a call to cultivate one's own pastures; the worker and speaker define each other's participation in the world, and the speaker's own love has been seen as straddling the line between an outward engagement and one that throbs stronger once it returns to its human source. A self-love is urged on the workers as they refuse to transcend their world while claiming mastery over it. Here Whitman seems to be renouncing the motif of cumulative refashioning of self and culture found in the nation's recent labor poems even if, for a moment, he taps the injunction to acquiesce in the limits of life that are also conveyed in such poems:

I do not say leadings you thought great are not
great,
But I say that none lead to greater, sadder, happier, than those lead to.

Will you seek afar off? you surely come back at
last,
In things best known to you, finding the best, or
as good as the best. (1856, 138)

Whitman's careful qualifications here block off the road to transcendence offered by such poems as Grayson's "The Heroism of Labor." Whitman rejects the image of the worker "rising by [the heart's] stern endurance" and "striving on" in "that soul of fixed defiance,"[50] because he means to remap the field upon which that defiance will be exercised. The worker must retrench within his own powers: he can get no closer than to himself, and that authority resides within a subject that has incorporated the self-image of a producer and conductor of the world, from which he must not turn away his attention. For that reason, the passage self-consciously declines to offer the "go forth" ordinance. Instead, it asks the workers to stay home while enacting their worldly power. That move inward then swerves toward an outward application in the 1856 edition.

The poem has already conflated two stages in the worker's path toward true occupation of his world, that is, the act of production and the reawakening of latent worth in the act of perception that traces the world back to him- or herself. This equivalence has also entered into the worker's new nonchalance. But for the first time the fruits of that achievement are projected outward into the world. That occurs in the lines beginning "The popular tastes," new to the 1856 edition:

You workwomen and workmen of These States
having your own divine and strong life—
looking the President always sternly in the
face, unbending, nonchalant, understanding
that he is to be kept by you to short and
sharp account of himself. (1856, 138–9)

This passage reverses the direction of the worker's glance: earlier, that figure had hypothetically been invited to "a look in the looking-glass" in order to find the "signs of the best" he had previously sought in the outside world (130); now he enters into a different kind of face-to-face confrontation as a result of "finding the best" (138) in his immediate surroundings. The worker is past the stage of self-reevaluation, ready to act upon the world that has been suddenly revealed as his own production and must be protected from those who would usurp authority over it.

The complex temporal mapping in this passage reveals the source of that authority. The actions toward the president are put in the same timeless participial form as "having your own divine and strong life" except that they are qualified by "always." That sense of a recurring process stands in contrast to the mechanisms of the president's subordination: his "short and sharp account" of himself evokes a retainer's panicky self-justification, and such deference can be guaranteed only when he is "kept" in that position indefinitely. When this clash between the permanent and the instant is placed in the context of how the workers must identify their worth, "not in another place, but this place—not for another hour, but this hour" (138), the effect is to transpose the concentration that gives the workers their authority in their rigorous inspection of what has "grown out of" them (128) over to the realm of their haughty supervision. (It turns out there are servants and masters after all.) Though fleeting, casual, and ongoing, the worker's authority derives from a restored authentic present moment. Just as all surrounding moments of their production resolve in the single instant of self-expression, so too the workers gain a sudden authority that can demand a "short and sharp account" from their underling. No further mediation, therefore, is needed.

Lurking within this passage is the equation between facing and facing down, and that equation belongs to the poetic representation of the workers regaining their dignity by affronting personally the denigration a residual class system is likely still to offer them. This motif crosses the murky line between literary and party representations. Whitman employs it in his editorials and in *The Eighteenth Presidency!* but borrows it from Jacksonian appeals to the worker to affirm his dignity through political choice. An early poem, vaguely directed to the 1832 National Republican campaign, offers an example: "Mechanics, Workingmen, your rights maintain . . . Shrink not before the coward lordling's face / Who meanly seeks to brand you with disgrace."[51]

Here the worker achieves equality in the act of demanding it, and the rest of the poem, like *The Eighteenth Presidency!*, represents this staring down as a recovery of the revolutionary privileges threatened by a recalcitrant hierarchy nourished by time. In "Poem of the Daily Work," Whitman assimilates the victory of such a challenge while bypassing its triggering mechanisms of an interpersonal threat, implicit insult, and final revelation of an acting competence. In his poem, Whitman attributes to his idealized workers an attitude of instinctual insouciance, not defiance itself. A taken-for-granted republican independence has no need to blazon itself. And there is no one present to whom to defer: the moment follows a train of aggrandizement for the worker so complete that it makes the president seem like little more than a hired functionary.

The political realm in which the worker arrogates authority becomes just an instance of the "anywhere" that vaguely defines where the occupations take precedence, the primary and distinctive realm remaining poetry itself. The defiance, in this case, resides not with the worker but in the speaker, as the last verse paragraph's rhetorical defense of its own worship registers formally. For the 1860 edition, Whitman adds lines before this defense. The declaration "All I love America for, is contained in men and women like you" (1860, 158) returns the speaker to the stance of the petitioning lover of the poem's opening and reinforces his self-abasement as the enraptured patriot who has to go to the source of his feeling to plumb the depths of his commitment. The addition highlights the stabilization of the poem's alignments of perception based on proximity: the workers needn't leave their world to confront the president, and the speaker needn't so much as look out toward the world to love America. His earlier question—"Does all sit there with you, and here with me?" (150)—has been answered. This perceptual reconfiguration, so different from the deathly stabilization in "A Boston Ballad" to be examined in the next chapter, obviates the need for the self-reevaluation the speaker had demanded from the workers at the beginning of the poem.

The speaker takes on the burden of self-presentation that is laid on the insecure worker in the labor poem tradition, and in so doing he implies that the proper valuation of labor rests with the nation, not with a class struggling toward a conception of its power and dignity. When the speaker concludes the "unfinished business" (1856, 121) between him and his lover, he lifts from

his partner the obligation to complete the transaction and remove the impediments to their union. Having compressed the qualities of the world into the worker in the form of attributes, the speaker is the one who must affirm his republican independence from the allures of civilization. The workers have been exempted from the directives of the challenge because their political authority inheres in the sinews of the world that they have created and that they needn't so much as sally out of in order to become the nation's sovereign.

The first three, and particularly the 1856 and 1860, versions of the poem, therefore, are less a reflection on labor's new position in a changing economic environment than a utopian fantasy of an absolute sovereignty the people can exercise by doing nothing more than realizing their world. It domesticates such sovereignty, returning it to the closed and intimate circle of the workers, and thereby returns political authority to the daily creation of their hands. The "lofty power," "the glorious privilege to do"[52] that the period's labor poetry patronizingly attributes to the cumulative efforts of the worker Whitman makes immediately available by restoring the mechanisms of republican rule to its authors on the strength of their still active powers. Parallel approaches to that restoration had long been a staple of party antislavery: a Free Soil poem from 1848, for example, turned on the conceit that the specialized actions of different occupations will fashion liberty's victory, a victory in one sense in the distance but in another about to be realized in a single moment. Blacksmiths, for instance, will

> blow, and strike, and forge, and weld,
> And make the cinders fly,
> And next election they will vote
> That slavery must die![53]

This campaign poem offers a direct chronological account of what the speaker in Whitman's poem grasps retrospectively: work itself authorizes the world. Both poems remove the intermediate and transitional stages by which the effort of work gives birth to political authority. In the other labor poem paired with "Poem of the Daily Work" in the 1856 and 1860 editions, those intermediate stages also fade into insignificance but, in this case, before the historical transfigurations that carve out a channel of development for labor's power.

"Poem of the Daily Work" assigns political authority on the grounds of the workers' title to the world in which that authority is to be exercised. Only by implication does it extend this authority over time to make labor the governor of human progress—the crux of the political antislavery stake in the territories. It is left for "Broad-Axe Poem" to find a property in the historical future encoded in the instruments of the workers' progression through history, to find a free West springing out of their efforts, liberated from the mediations that have locked labor's power in its mystifying and undeployable residue. The poem relies on the fruitful conflations also evident in the political antislavery movement: the fact that the workers have at their command the instruments of a future-producing labor is reduced to the assertion that they govern that future. Both Whitman and the movement he was bolstering were less interested in the specific instrumentalities by which that governance would be exercised than in affirming the metaphorical associations that make it seem an inevitable characteristic already inhering in the present.

"Broad-Axe Poem" charts a path where the tools of revolutionary change are purified as they lose their mediatory function in the elevation of the worker and thereby equip the worker with an uncompromised power that can assume sovereignty over the nation's future. Through this process, the worker caught up in various modes of despotism gradually gives way to political antislavery's allegorical figure, "free labor." Whereas "Poem of the Daily Work" swings the reader's apprehension of the world toward the single point of the laborer who produced that world, "Broad-Axe Poem" brings all historical progress to the single point where the act of labor itself can dissolve the distinction between producer of the world and redeemer of republicanism. To be sure, the worker's elevation into citizen lies waiting in this trajectory, and the critic Robin Hoople makes the important point that the metamorphosis of the headsman's axe into the "creative instrument" of the broad-axe "corresponds to the metamorphosis of the man from serf or subject to possessor—of himself, of his liberty, of his universe."[54] Nevertheless, to foreground that political metamorphosis as an independent development would thwart Whitman's aim to harness the power concentrated and purified in the act of labor alone for two interdependent purposes, what he defines early on as "strong shapes" and "attributes of strong shapes" (1860, 126). Both the redeemed actor and the vessels of future freedom are comprehended within those shapes. Struggling to channel a vision that brings those two

together, the speaker eventually attributes all progress to the labor power propelling the world.

Whereas "Poem of the Daily Work" is an appeal, an invocation, and a plea, "Broad-Axe Poem" is a visionary meditation. The poem progresses not in the speaker's relationship to its addressee but in his evolving historical perspective. The speaker cannot at first derive a line of development from his meditations on the axe that would cut through the immutable and eternally recurrent engine of human accomplishment to reveal a particular inheritance for his nation—and hence for himself. He takes his first step in drawing that line when he, having formally celebrated the axe and its fruits, links it to the ongoing settlement of Europeans throughout the North American continent. In forging this bond of association, the poem follows the rewriting in the mid-nineteenth century of the nation's founding, where religious dissent and other motivations were overshadowed by labor itself—as if the emigrants sought not a new kind of governance but a new field for their efforts.[55] Cataloging without further explanation items both concrete and abstract, this section implies a generative process that is distinct to American political culture. After a few lines on the settlers, the poem adds the following to the list:

> The beauty of independence, departure, actions that
> rely on themselves,
> The American contempt for statutes and ceremonies,
> the boundless impatience of restraint. (1860, 128)

Whitman here recruits the standard story of American development while following the period's labor poetry in occluding the relations of production so that acts of labor can be defined as "actions that rely on themselves" to nurture republicanism. The poem proceeds with an account of how this primal energy—now defined as the particularly American variety of a world energy—solidifies into types and occupations, which Whitman lists in conjunction with the kinds of work they perform as they build up their constituted world. As with "Poem of the Daily Work," however, Whitman refuses the clean narrative path where these efforts then congeal into the larger institutions and polities that sustain them. He rejects that projected city as the fruit of their accomplishments in order to return to an idealized city of a different character, where the "actions that rely on themselves" survive only in the moment of their execution and in their placement within an irregularly marked narrative line.

His road to that idealized city begins when images of the axe in its current use transport him suddenly to the "shadowy processions of the portraits of the past users" (130); he struggles to discriminate among those moments so as to chart a trajectory that begins with them and blossoms into an idealized future. At first, he fails and must fall back on Whitman's typical gesture of universal historical acceptance: as the image of the continent's European settlers gives way to a confused vision of a town's sacking, the chaos matches the speaker's inability to distinguish between just and unjust government decrees, between brigands and freedom fighters. He stifles that confusion with a formal declaration that seems to abjure discriminations and patterns in the human race's development: "Muscle and pluck forever!" This all-inclusive embrace of the past, accepting the need for both "roughness" and "delicatesse," requires him to find a new coagent for labor that will cut through the random exercise of human power (131).

That new source for organizing the human race's progress bears some affinity with the American story from which anarchic violence had distracted the speaker, but it cannot be reduced to it. The rest of the poem finds the speaker striving to bestow his prophetic vision of the ideal city on America as heir—something not achieved by any number of pilgrim stories. Only the axe's integrity through the pandemonium of history eventually gives him that chance. He eschews celebrating measurable historical achievements: the slow building up of institutions compatible with freedom or the development of ever more efficient technologies. He alludes to such accomplishments, but they are not what "endure." The people must not fall back on what the past has created. In the most pronounced gesture of the speaker's presentation, he banishes the very constructed world whose formation he seems to have devoted several verse paragraphs to honouring:

> Away! These are not to be cherished for themselves,
> They fill their hour. . . .
> . . . . . .
> All does very well till one flash of defiance. (1860, 131)

Whereas in "Poem of the Daily Work" that flash of defiance comes at the end of a long self-evaluatory process, whose purposes are fulfilled in that moment, here that flash becomes foundational and originating. It electrifies future expansion with the assurance that any move to fetishize the fruits of

labor will always be broken up by a resurgence of the impulse that makes acts of labor independent and resistant to institutional control. It also creates a new line of development where these intermittent flashes are smoothed out over an even historical trajectory. As a result, the eventual fruits of these moments build the institutional and material sinews upon which the "pluck and muscle" can sustain, in the long run, its brief moments of victory.

The ideal city is, then, a distillation of pure acts of sovereignty, whose inclusions and prohibitions reflect perfectly the labor that went into giving it life; it is the city that would exist if the flashes of defiance were concentrated and infused into a coherent and continuous polity. At first the representation of this city seems to affirm a quasi-Rousseauian preference for governmental forms in their early stages of development, as if human rights and cooperative action were possible only in their primitive stage. But as Whitman lists the attributes displayed by "where" the ideal city is, it becomes clear that this utopian polity, while certainly one that has resisted the corruptions of decline, is primarily one where the daily operations reflect the moments of defiance that intermittently run throughout its genesis:

> Where the men and women think lightly of the laws,
> Where the slave ceases, and the master of slaves ceases,
> Where the populace rise at once against the never-ending audacity of elected persons,
> Where fierce men and women pour forth, as the sea to the whistle of death pours its sweeping and unript waves,
> Where outside authority enters always after the precedence of inside authority,
> Where the citizen is always the head and ideal—and President, Mayor, Governor, and what not, are agents for pay. (1860, 132–3)

One of the strange effects of this poem's utopian representations comes out most strongly here: this passage describes a purely hypothetical polity capable of being reconstructed out of detachable moments in the human story. Yet at another level it conforms in all its particulars with the Republican party's

representation of the free-state settlers in Kansas at the time of the poem's first appearance—particularly in their determination to keep the territory free, rebelling against the authority first wielded by invading proslavery usurpers and then institutionalized by a compromised federal government. In such a situation, the ideal program in "Poem of the Daily Work" of defying the president in the very act of continuing one's work takes on a practical form in a perilous attempt at self-governance. The "inside authority" of the free-state settlers was obeyed at a very real price.

If "Broad-Axe Poem" abstracts only principles from this real-life situation, it does so because it follows other representations of Kansas as the purest expression of an independent economic life blooming, when threatened with its opposite, into political self-reliance. The poem's speaker presents that achievement as if it were merely the final organic stage in the apotheosis of free labor. He imagines that apotheosis before being able to see it channeled by America into a self-generative machine.

Before that stage, however, Whitman insists that the city is imaginary to avoid tracing out yet one more comforting historical trajectory. When the poem returns to the historical past and the catalog of workers, it lays its rendition at the feet of the allegorical "one man or woman" who makes the accomplishments and institutions accumulated around them bow in deference. The poem, in introducing the historical catalog, formally offers the particular items to that figure as the tools by which its newly emerged authority can be exercised. Those accomplishments then get absorbed into an analogy that explains how the inner resources of that "one man or woman" can be tapped: they are akin to a sterile landscape whose riches can be extracted through labor. History as a force over the speaker gives way to what the speaker can derive from the true agent that has made history bow to its will: "The centuries, and all authority, to be trod under the foot-soles of one man or woman!" (134). The act of defiance, the "strong being," "the electric deed" to which Whitman has subordinated actual civilizational development now become—in a reversal of how agent and object typically line up in an act of human exertion—what needs to be dug out through the sweat of our brows (133).

Whereas traditional labor poems would celebrate how such acts of labor tease the dead world into a new useful life, Whitman goes to the root of that celebration by taking labor as a fit metaphor for a self-realization that acts

upon the world. But in a strange appropriation of his metaphor's vehicle, the poem blends the extractable product from the furnace, mine, or landscape with the work required to excavate them, so that the line blurs between the strong person's electric deed and the daily act of labor: "There is the mine, there are the miners." This particular phrasing here is also reminiscent of the inertness that the critic Kerry Larson finds in the speaker's vision in the early stages of "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd."[56] When the speaker writes "A sterile landscape covers the ore," he is the observer striving to imagine the ore "for all the forbidding appearance." He sets himself the task of mining. These various conflations in the speaker's analogy prepare the ground for the final stage of the poem where the axe itself wields all powers and all fruits within itself and, just as significantly, the speaker can envisage future growth in those terms. For now, the speaker struggles toward that apprehension in one of his ambivalent generalizations, at once inspiring him to continue his excavatory meditation and frustrating his desire for a pattern of development: "What always served and always serves, is at hand" (134).

His catalog of the historical record in the light of the one power that has "served" the human race's advances eventually leads him to what will become the poem's turning point, when the speaker's grasp of a universal power yields finally to a narrative of historical substitution that equips the speaker to integrate the individual human authority into shaping forms. As critics have observed,[57] the crux of the poem comes near the end when the weapons of revolution and battle yield place to the tools of labor, triggering an ecstatic prophetic vision of the world-making shapes, human and governmental, that arise in the wake of this transfiguration. This eventual resolution derives in part from the typical democratic story of the artificial tools of monarchical government falling away to make room for the people's inherent power, a story reflected in turn in some labor poems, such as Tristam Burges's "The Plough and the Sickle."

> The Plough and the Sickle shall shine bright in glory,
> When the sword and the sceptre shall crumble in rust;
> And the farmer shall live, both in song and in story,
> When warriors and kings are forgotten in dust.[58]

Whitman's poem follows this common account of the people's ascent first to sovereignty and then to chronicle, but he instills it with the terms of po-

litical antislavery in two ways. The sword has an intermediary life as a tool of revolution before it is supplanted. Supporting this change is a condition that Whitman rigorously sets for the eventual substitution, a condition that must be met before Whitman can unleash the process to do its work. That is the condition of historical inheritance.

The poem has already established that "the dead advance as much as the living advance" (131), provided that the people assimilate the characteristic acts of the dead rather than simply subsist on what they leave behind. The dead advance when placed in a restored narrative trajectory where their "muscle and pluck" map discernable high points in the historical chronicle. Conflating acts of defiance with physical acts upon the material world sets the stage for the final replacement of the headsman's axe with the laborer's tool. That mode of memory alone permitted the imagining of the ideal city, where historical reconstruction makes its way to daily self-governance. Paradoxically, the one man or woman who treads casually over centuries in the execution of his or her will can make that journey because they have been put in the speakers' newly perceived line of descent. What the speaker emphasizes in a new catalog on "what has served" is the contribution to the present: he claims it as his own in the phrase that what has always served "is at hand." It becomes available to him when he finishes his catalog with the affirmation that it has "served not the living only, then as now, but served the dead" (135). The dead have made this power available, and the speaker then has a direct access to the teleological process that had eluded him before.

The speaker's vision of the blood of the executed royals and noblemen washed from the axe marks a turning point in his relationship to his historical reveries. It is the first time the axe has not conjured up in his memory its antecedents and results; he can now imagine the present axe as the product of a purifying integration that is visible only through the dual perspective of the past's violent moments and the present reclamation of the power inscribed within it:

> I see the headsman withdraw and become useless,
> I see the scaffold untrodden and mouldy—I see no
> longer any axe upon it,
> I see the mighty and friendly emblem of the power of
> my own race, the newest largest race. (1860, 136)

He sees the axe again, and he sees it for the first time. In appropriating it for his people, he has cleaned it of its historical notches and restored it to its ultimate purpose. "Muscle and pluck forever"; "what has always served"—these extractable powers from the historical record give way to a substitution that alone gives America a distinct world role. Only in imagining the usurped authority of despotic rule and then revolutionary defiance as reincarnated within the laborer's axe can the speaker integrate the will, authority, defiance, and self-ownership that he earlier envisaged as free of context. They now belong to an America that needn't be blindly worshiped because it can let its inheritance do its spontaneous work.

The axe of revolution becomes the "mighty and friendly emblem of the power of my own race," and the speaker claims it in a collapse of his admiration into true ownership: "America! I do not vaunt my love for you, / I have what I have." His accelerated visionary procession, then, comes from a proprietary claim that makes him the true heir to the past's victories. The cessation of the speaker's struggles in his ecstatic vision reflects the historical victory at the level of its apprehension. The formal conclusion to the speaker's celebration marks the end of all mediations, even human—for labor as a power is about to assume an uncannily pure agency. "The axe leaps," however, not to suggest some unstoppable triumph of disembodied force but to narrativize the poem's ideal of labor coming into its own on the strength of a historical consolidation (136).

In his ecstatic vision, the speaker is liberated from the separation of means and ends that made the worker the mere wielder of the tools that would serve the interests of some third party. The change in syntax reflects this concentration. Earlier in the poem, even the most celebratory account of work had followed the pattern where acts of labor give forms to a world that facilitates the next stage of development: "the swing of their axes on the square-hewed log, shaping it toward the shape of a mast" (129). In contrast, the final verse paragraphs where "the shapes arise" follow the pattern of an autogenerative creation that blurs the demarcations of production in the enthusiasm of the natural world to rush toward the final ends (137). This shift is more in keeping with the idealized image of the territories' future, if unmolested by slavery, presented in this chapter's opening paragraphs:

> The axe leaps!
> The solid forest gives fluid utterances,

They tumble forth, they rise and form,
Hut, tent, landing, survey,
Flail, plough, pick, crowbar, spade,
Shingle, rail, prop, wainscot, jamb, lath, panel, gable,
Citadel, ceiling, saloon, academy, organ, exhibition-
house, library.
. . . . . .
Capitols of States, and capitol of the nation of States. (1860, 136–7)

The division between tools and outcomes here disappears as the axe begins to serve no interest but its unmediated embodiment. The forest gives utterances that climb the scale of creation without the marks of division that would reflect the hierarchical development into higher forms. This detachment of the poet's own "utterance," also tumbling forth, from the demarcations of production is a common feature of Whitman's catalogs in general, but here it bears the marks of one of its rhetorical antecedents. The speaker no longer warns himself or his readers against fetishizing what seem the final products, because they are now as much an emanation of the axe as they are of the worker in the previous poem.

This account is in keeping also with the antislavery party representations of a West blossoming out of unhindered free labor so independent of any deliberate design that its deeper historical purpose can be communicated only metonymically in a list of particulars. This representation took center stage as the quasi-military conflict in Kansas continued. J. G. Holland's long Republican campaign poem steps aside from its satirical purpose to echo the sublime development reflected in Whitman's "The axe leaps!" passage—at once spontaneous and the work of human hands, instantaneous in the sense that the forces of nature fuse with the laborer's organic intention:

And, 'neath the magic of the freeman's wand,
Primordial harvests wave on either hand,
And embryo cities, in a moment made,
Throb to the pulses of maternal trade.[59]

Relevant to Whitman's participation in this trope is Martin Klammer's important observation that the roots of Whitman's catalogs can be found in his antislavery editorials, where professions are listed to suggest figures who

are representative yet still notable in their particularity. Klammer makes this point to show Whitman branching out of his "derivative" antislavery editorials toward a distinctive voice in the next decade.[60]

Yet the catalog remained throughout the antebellum period a key rhetorical device of party antislavery and hence continued to carry the charge it had in Whitman's editorial. Such catalogs often included lists of workers, or of activities, or of sounds always suggesting teeming uncoordinated activities that would cohere into a greater efficacy through no discrete intent of their own.[61] At times these realizations were put up against the deliberate designs of slavery, a force incapable of generating those beneficent results but able to channel its scarce energies into the single purpose of conquest-based survival. The catalog of the instrument or effects thus provided a model for producing a new world at the same time it represented that world under threat. These catalogs obscured individual performances, paradoxically, in order to emphasize the one act of collective sovereignty that would make the new world possible. The development in "Broad-Axe" inscribes that one act into the axe itself.

The axe can be at once friendly and mighty, not by disavowing or transcending the confrontations executed by the weapons of a previous era but by encoding the defiance and conflict of that instrument into its own beneficent and world-shaping performances. It thus fulfills the prophecy of the ideal city that the speaker can at last assign to his own nation. The axe becomes like the polity of free labor, in which it has found its true home: in the mere exercise of its own most fundamental faculty, it organizes the world so as to allow its continued reign. Just as representations of free labor of the period foresaw individual acts of labor as streaming into the collective will, unconsciously and spontaneously forming the ideal republic, so too the axe confers on the individual acts of defiance—earlier deceptively segregated from a larger trajectory—the governing shapes that will sustain them. The single axe figures forth this virtuous circle. Indeed, the axe itself is a figure for labor having united means and ends and thereby becoming more than an instrument of some alien purpose, some "executive deed" outside its own realization.

Even the human agents of this process do not escape this nexus: the ideal woman and the ideal man are themselves arising shapes who, while they indeed produce the future, do so only because they have inherited what had

always been the axe's true power, once uncontaminated by mediations. Their daily routine becomes not just the maker of the future but an enactment of it: "Avowing by life, manners, works, to contribute illustrations of results of The States." With such a figure, whose mere survival will illustrate the states, an idealized America can then become self-perpetuating and self-generating —"Shapes of a hundred Free States, begetting another hundred north and south" (142). This is not the Northern conservative's quietism, a faith that national preservation alone will unlock unstoppable beneficent forces. Whitman showed in *The Eighteenth Presidency!* that he had no faith in such a process when he warned against the inevitable result of political concession: "there will steadily wheel into this Union, for centuries to come, slave state after slave state."[62] Prophesying the opposite, "Broad-Axe Poem" has established that the outcome rests on specific policies that reflect more fundamental principles: in the utopian city "the slave ceases" (132) in an automatic deference to historical precedent that is, to be sure, inevitable in one sense but nevertheless willed and accomplished.

Nor is this idealized process unaffiliated with the far more concrete representations of the free-state settlers in Kansas. In retrospect, particularly in the light of the John Brown raids, we tend today to picture the free-state community as involved in a bloody war with its enemies that presaged the broader national conflict. But, at the time, Democrats alone (when they did not evade the issue in assurances of peace) emphasized the free-state settlers' bellicosity,[63] while the political antislavery parties depicted that group as if their peaceful establishment of an uncorrupted and refreshed free-labor community itself constituted their resistance to the invading proslavery forces—who, of course, took up the weapons best suited to their own social system, based as it was on usurpation, violence, and coercion. Whereas their opponents adopted the old weapons derived from "the barbarism of bygone ages,"[64] the free-state settlers wielded the weapons of labor itself. The historical process in "Broad-Axe Poem," where the headsman's axe gives way to the worker's, was played out on a stage where history would declare one of those tools finally triumphant. A poem by John Pierpont, satirically adopting the voice of the proslavery aggressors, presents an allegory in keeping both with this representation and with Whitman's synecdoche of the axe. Pierpont's villains are terrified not by Whitman's bloody headsman's axe but by its purified successor, the mere tools of everyday work wielded by their free-state enemies:

All the winds from Kansas bring
Sounds that fill our souls with dread
Woodmen's axes—hear 'em ring—
Labor, earning its own bread.[65]

Here the workaday world's sounds hit the slavers' ears as threatening indices and instruments of a slavery-annulling sovereignty. And that sovereignty was meant at once to inspire and to epitomize an awakened sovereignty in the free states based on a similar expression of practical power. The defiance necessary to defeat the ruthless force of slavery, now embodied in a perfectly expressive form, resided in two realms far apart geographically but, in essence, standing on the same ground.

Indeed, the historical sublime of "Broad-Axe Poem," which sees labor finally becoming a tool not for despotism or revolution but for its own realization in the new shapes born of it, affiliates the poem most closely with the utopian representations of the Republican party. In those representations, free labor operates on two distinct, but mutually dependent, stages: the territories and the free states, only the second enjoying a physically unthreatened authority. Republicans never tired of mapping out their eventual victory in those terms: "While our emigrant brethren are contending for freedom in the field, be it ours to conquer it in November at the ballot box."[66] What Whitman, then, subdivides temporally—in his fantasy of a city whose suppression of slavery first directs the speaker's attention to one great man or woman but then eventually unleashes a transpersonal historical process—the party subdivided spatially, through the drama of the territories reawakening the free states to their historical duty. To Republicans, the free states must produce the single act of defiance that carries Whitman's speaker from the hypothetical city to a redeemed America. And the same metonymic conflation of inspiration and instrument ran throughout the Republican call: a piece representing a menaced Kansan free-state community as a microcosm of the nation insisted, "The Free States must take the weapons into their own hands and use them."[67]

Once this transfer of power from the territory to the free states is effected, the historical process of spontaneous and unstoppable generation of future free states that "Broad-Axe Poem" predicts can be left to its own momentum, as it ricochets back to the distant territories. Not only Kansas but all the West would bloom into freedom the moment the political resolve formed

in the free states to bring about that end: with a Republican victory, "Kansas becomes a free state, and the 'central flowery kingdom' of our sisterhood of states becomes inoculated with the resistless energy of freedom, leading on the path of empire above and beyond the rocky mountains."[68] This assurance that a Free Kansas will ensure a free population "to be multiplied indefinitely in future centuries"[69] undergirds the promise of self-generating procreation made by "Broad-Axe Poem," the "shapes, ever projecting other shapes," which Whitman immediately specifies as endlessly reproductive "Free States" (142).

Such a victory depends not only on the recovered power of "Broad-Axe Poem" but also on the recovered self-respect of "Poem of the Daily Work." Indeed, Republicans conferred on the people, as a redeemed political citizenship, the power to realize through governing the West the long-term mission to assign labor the dignity that properly belongs to it. Their choice will reserve the West for free institutions "in a perfection never attained," where the "emancipated and dignified labor" of the free states achieves its final apotheosis.[70] When labor coordinates its natural tendency to "look . . . forward to something beyond the present"[71] with the immediate assertion of will that can come from a just self-image, the West and the future will be stamped with the redeemed impetus that goes into shaping them. Like the prophecy of an unstoppable path of empire, such forecasts depend on the pivotal moment of exercised political will, and both "Poem of the Daily Work" and "Broad-Axe Poem" mythologize that moment of crisis, making it of no particular space or time so that it can appear to be the concentrated realization of an inexorable historical process that it helps to unleash.

Both labor poems examined here offer a historical trajectory, however abstract, to the political resolve that Whitman's party urged on the people in the present moment, and in that history the transpersonal force Free Labor arrives at the turning point. Republicans charted the nation's history along similar lines. Thus, William Seward represented a Republican triumph not as a mere party victory but as the culmination of a process whereby the system antithetical to slavery had come into consciousness of its historical mission after long delays: "Free Labor has at last apprehended its rights, its interests, its power, and its destiny, and is organizing itself to assume the government of the Republic."[72]

Indeed, the political antislavery celebration of labor went beyond class valorization to envisage a nation uniting means and ends, as the daily activity

of work finally finds its way into political expression to bring on a millennium. In the channeling of a universal human power into the realm of politics, the problem of republics' notoriously unstable footing "shall be solved, and the vast conceptions and demonstrations of mind shall be fully equalled by the capacities and powers of his [man's] physical nature and genius—and then, in its relations to governments, nations will decline no more."[73] Whereas in the period's labor poetry such redemptive usurpation is only vaguely forecast, in party antislavery it stood as an immediate promise: the republic "shall live by its own right" the instant it throws off the oligarchy's stranglehold and employs the energies of the workman "who aims to get his living by the use of his own powers."[74] The free laborer, then, was a figure for the citizens who take the nation's fate back into their own hands. That analogy helps also to explain why Whitman presses the worker into service in *The Eighteenth Presidency!*: that tract's fantasy of an end to all mediations, expressed in its ostensible disdain for parties, finds the perfect agent for that ideal in the self-directed laborer. In *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman takes further his reliance on that figure by enthroning the laborer's physical efforts as history's sole authentic agent.

Together, the two labor poems gird with a complete historical narrative the line of inheritance, at once inevitable and vulnerable, barely sketched out in the Whitman and Mabey passages with which this chapter opened. Those passages base the workers' prior claim to the territories on the guarantee that their work will itself create a patrimony. In *Leaves of Grass*, the territorial fields are a "treasure sublime" because they are the site where the sovereignty of the present can be planted and hence projected over historical time. The two polemical works and Whitman's poems insist that work alone can be passed on; in that insistence, they reject the fetishizing of civilization that can lure the people into living parasitically off its fruits. Indeed, in decoupling the American achievement from its concrete and institutional effects, Whitman's poems cooperate with the Republican challenge to the workers to see themselves as holding in trust not a mere bequest but a mode of becoming. As a way of emphasizing that difference, one typical appeal to the "free workingman" to protect his place in the line of descent foresaw the people courting defeat should they mistake the bounty of the present for the true legacy they can bestow upon their posterity: "Shall we bequeath to our children merely the acquisitions of the past and the possessions of to-day,

fruitless, barren, and hopeless of future honor, fame, and glory, unstimulated by enterprize, unrewarded by industry, and paralyzed for want of energy?" Here the dooming of the territories to the ravaging effects of slavery breaks the chain of cumulative performances, which depends on passing on a charge, not a residue. And that betrayal itself occurs through a failure of defiance and independence in the present, namely "giving our consent to the extension of slavery."[75] Nothing but relics can be passed on if the present moment of labor does not emit its sole unmediated and unfetishizable product of political will.

Whitman similarly redefines the mechanisms of American inheritance: his imaginary world runs on a self-generating network of free states, whose genealogy can be reduced to the intermittent moments where the full benefits of self-reliance express themselves in action. Whitman takes the wider culture's celebration of labor's "muscle and pluck" as the unconscious parent of a sturdy republicanism and sets for it a political condition that cannot be evaded, that already inheres within its emergence into history. The "muscle and pluck" must remain united in a single agent who brooks no distinction between fashioning the concrete world and determining the contours of its social relations. Whitman thus fully integrates the party's challenge to the worker into a loftier utopian celebration of a nation that has at last subdued slavery by reconciling will and latent power in ways anticipated—but at times despaired of—in *The Eighteenth Presidency!*

CHAPTER THREE

The Revolution, Party Antislavery Typology, and the 1856 *Leaves of Grass*

"Broad-Axe Poem" presents its speaker surveying the past until the long superseded moments of authority begin to seem encoded within the tools of a self-reproducing future. The prominence in the second edition of *Leaves of Grass* of a new poem that inculcates a particular kind of public commemoration, "Poem of Remembrances for a Girl or a Boy of These States," suggests that the 1856 edition, also the first home of "Broad-Axe Poem," has a particular concern with reorienting the nation's apprehension of the past in order to supplant the people's alienation from their own power anatomized in *The Eighteenth Presidency!* The conventional sentiments at the base of "Poem of Remembrances," however, also remind us that Whitman was operating in a rhetorical universe that supplied ready-made vehicles for demanding historical engagement from the people. One such vehicle was offered by the party system. The room for maneuver within its terms would have seemed to be stiflingly small.

Indeed, if one were to look for a code that illustrated how the second and third party systems of antebellum America ran on a consensus sustained by an inflexible rhetorical system, then one could scarcely do better than the trope by which the current generation was urged to honor, through their present political decisions, the founders' revolutionary achievement. This trope was so universal and pervasive as to muffle the distinctions that could allow it to be used as anything more than a legitimizing rhetorical decoration for a policy appeal made on more substantive grounds. Yet its continued deployment when the dominant national issue became the extension of slavery into the

territories illustrates how the implications of the trope could be readjusted to serve either antislavery or conservative agendas. An antislavery party that was on the brink of becoming mainstream had the task of at once showing deference to the code and turning it to their own ends.

Helping to reconcile these two aims, the very density of the trope's appearances in political discourse and the very familiarity of its ring opened up the possibility of reconfiguring its implications, while only subtly challenging its basic terms. That is, a new party could make the patriotic gesture that was also a rather hackneyed call to arms in such a way as to imply, without showily proclaiming, that the more common variety that had appeared over the last many decades was inadequate to the demands of the moment and, indeed, to the fathers' original sacrifice. In their very dutiful invocations of the appeal, Republicans could build up a new model of generational rededication while signaling that they would follow the unspoken rules of party competition. No fierce satirical contest, such as the one to be examined in chapter 5, was needed to achieve this dual purpose. All it required was raising the stakes. Through their own constant reiterations, the Free Soil and Republican parties nudged the trope toward implications that stood directly at odds with the deployment by other parties.

Of the three antebellum editions of *Leaves of Grass*, the one that stands out as participating most fully in this rhetorical project is the second, the 1856 edition. As Betsy Erkkila pointed out thirty years ago, Whitman "began in 1856 to date his poems in relation to the formation of the American republic."[1] The fathers' deeds, then, are recalled by the very titles of individual poems, and that framing reinforces the edition's pattern of development. Whitman constructs the 1856 poetry cycle so as to take up the more rigorous demand for historical engagement that political antislavery had been carving out for a decade: to replace mere latter-day imitation of the fathers with actual participation in their founding action as the only authentic mode of historical memory. In this edition, the promise of historical recovery appears as a remedy to the dangers faced by a blood-drained republic—the national suicide bred by devotion to the present moment. The 1856 edition sets up ideals of historical reactivation that it then punctures in its clearest representation of the actual political state of the nation, in the poem eventually entitled "A Boston Ballad." Only with that nadir reached can the cycle offer a way out that hinges on the rhetorical tradition Whitman's party was energetically

transfiguring. To understand how Whitman's 1856 *Leaves of Grass* joins that revisionary project, one must first examine the trope of rededication out of which it emerged.

Whatever particular faction employed it, the trope translated political choice into the fulfillment of a mission. It measured loyalty to the fathers' revolutionary sacrifice in the willingness of the present generation to sustain what was wrought by that sacrifice. Preservation would depend upon imitation—of the actions that constituted that sacrifice, the resolve that informed it, and the characteristics that facilitated it. The sacred heritage could be transmitted to subsequent generations only by modeling action on the founders' performance. It thus assigned, directly or indirectly, the role of fathers to the present generation; and this will end up being the greatest importance of the trope to Whitman. As with all features of political appeals that tapped the principles of republicanism, under its prescriptions ran a fear that the people would not be up to the task, would prove themselves, in the common phrase, degenerate sons of the very generation that brought them into being and granted the power of political choice to them. Those generational anxieties have received a strong interpretation from the historian George Forgie. In *Patricide in the House Divided*, he argues that the mid-century cohort of politicians saw themselves as a "post-heroic generation," bound together by their common allegiance to the heroic fathers but also engaged in "peculiarly emotional" fraternal rivalry that ultimately dashed the hopes of compromise. Forgie shows how the rhetoric of nationality barred a generation of patriots from viewing their actions independently of the Revolution's achievement.[2] Putting aside Forgie's theory of the sociopsychological dynamics that underlay that rhetoric, the approach here will examine the demands that party expressions of this obligation placed on their addressee.

In most iterations of the conceit, the call to imitate the fathers was always in danger of running up against an unavoidable paradox: while the fathers took original action to pass a heritage on to their descendants, the current generation was charged merely with "guard[ing] with jealous care"[3] what their ancestors had already created—a diminishment in task whose implications George Forgie has examined in detail. How could the same initiative,

energy, and character be required merely to keep alive what had already been perfectly formed? To a certain extent, the prescription for how to avert republican decline offered a paradigm to hush this paradox. All the same, the remaining tension between preservation and contribution gave the political antislavery movement an opening that would allow it to recode the conceit for its own purposes. Such transformations were possible because the culture had developed mechanisms by which the conceit could be slavishly followed while at the same time subtly modified to achieve a particular party purpose. The conservative Union-saving work along these lines offers a vivid example, while also setting the context for the antislavery countermaneuver.

As a call for conservation of sorts, the conceit already had conservative implications (though in the mid-nineteenth century the adjective more strongly connoted nonideological preservation). Since the union of states was the most measurable legacy of the patriots, the conceit lent itself to warnings against threats to the Union, and such warnings remained largely the preserve of slavery-accommodating parties. The danger of disunion the conservatives foresaw helped to smooth over the paradox described above because it conflated the fathers' revolutionary sacrifice with the formal structures they themselves subsequently retained, protected, or instituted in order to carry that sacrifice over into nationhood and governance. Something more tame than revolutionary fervor was thus available for imitation by the present generation. In the following typical Democratic employment of the appeal, the addition of the term "moderation" collapses the remembered performance of the founders into the stance conservatives urged the free states to take in acceding to Southern demands:

> Our freedom was won for us by the bravery, the wisdom, and the moderation of the revolutionary fathers, and can only be maintained and perpetuated by the extreme of like qualities by the present generation. . . . Our liberties and privileges will not preserve themselves. If we wish to continue to enjoy them, and transmit them unimpaired to posterity, we must show ourselves worthy of them by our action.[4]

The incongruous, almost absurd, appeal to the extremes of moderation in this passage recalls Whitman's 1850 mockery of a Union-saving meeting's "agitating demonstration in behalf of calm and quiet."[5] In both cases, however, the apparent conflict lying within a passionate advocacy for nondis-

ruptive performances illustrates how the conservative parties trumpeted the discipline of restraint as the imitative child of revolution. The only way to match the intense commitment of the fathers was through careful steps so delicately executed that they would not disturb the fathers' achievement, thus proving that the present generation still has, in the words of another Democratic iteration, "reverence for those apostle patriots of [the] nation's early days."[6] The greater the strain produced by this reverent care, the more clearly it matches the fervor of the patriots with a present devotion for the institutions and practices the nation had developed to protect their accomplishment; the sacrifice of revolution could be honored only through the sacrifice of principle to a nurturing conciliation.

The political antislavery movement did not reject the generational division of labor between creation and preservation that lent itself so well to their opponents' program. As one Republican campaign poem put it, "that glorious heritage [the fathers] gave . . . / It is *our* glorious part to save."[7] Nor did they reject the ideal of imitation as the fit instrument for refining the charge to the people. They posited, however, a different genealogical bond between the Revolution and the deeds of the present day. Consistently, the movement insisted on drawing a direct narrative line from the deeds of the patriots to the present—so that those original acts of some eighty years earlier could not be seen as completed or even performed except when placed in succession with the deeds about to be committed. The fathers' actions became redemptive events only in their subsequent realization. Without that realization, they joined a very different trajectory.

At times, this retrospective reading was brought out merely to accentuate the irony that the successful fight for liberty from a colonial occupation seems to have led to the growth of slavery, as if expelling the British had cleared the way for slavery's continental conquests. The following campaign poem thus takes geographical space as the stage upon which revolutionary victory could be harnessed to an ultimate defeat:

Why was it that our grandsires brave,
    Freed us from British thrall?
That Freedom *here* should find her grave,
    And Slavery's frightful pall
    Spread far and wide?[8]

The doubt raised about the impetus the founders unloosed can perhaps be settled in action; otherwise, the current facts themselves provide the single possible response to a merely rhetorical question. That bind pivots on this poem's emphatic "here."

If the field has been won, if the father's patrimony blossomed into a new spatial medium on the very ground it had conquered, if that land sketched the boundaries for a progress set in motion by a founding act, how could the "here" that maps that space be the marker of a new degradation? A speaker at a Fremont ratification meeting offered a typical solution to that puzzle with the most fundamental party antislavery diagnosis, in a formulation that does explicitly what the poem does implicitly—use the deictic marker "here" not to suggest space, but the present moment: "Why is it that we here in this noonday of the nineteenth century are living again in Revolutionary times? . . . It is because a power exists within this Government at war with the spirit of Freedom."[9] The people face the ironic situation of a postrevolutionary society thrust back to its original battle. The fathers had seeded space and seeded time for a final fulfillment, and the perverted growth of those intended mediums only serve to heighten the clash between the fathers' accomplishments and their heirs' actual patrimony. Because similar implications emerge from the recurrent "here" in Whitman's "A Boston Ballad" (to be examined in this chapter's second half), another such Republican work, which resembles that poem's narrative even more directly, merits consideration:

> Long years ago your fathers strove
> For freedom from a tyrant's sway,
> Strove, not in vain, yet here ye stand,
> Bound by a heavier chain today.[10]

The "here ye stand" marries the geographical and historical irony in the other passages with a judgment on the ostensibly free citizen's passivity. This figure finds himself enchained not only by the Slave Power but by the paradox that a successful revolution has borne such bitter fruit; and he must occupy a space that grotesquely reconciles the fathers' victory with the fathers' defeat in his own placement within it.

The party itself offers the remedy to this degradation. Because of this reversion where there should have been fulfillment, the people must, as a Republican broadside put it in 1856, fight again "the old-time battle be-

tween Liberty and Slavery, between Democratic equality and Aristocratic oppression."[11] The patrimony can be restored in the struggle to reenact its first victory. This representation of the present moment as a reappearance of the conditions of the revolutionary period was not new to party discourse; it tended to emerge whenever a party defined its task as exposing and resisting a long emerging but insufficiently recognized oligarchy—a far from uncommon rationale for party formation in the early nineteenth century. The standard call for imitation of the fathers would take on a sharper edge under that banner. The anti-Masonic party, for instance, insisted that the "free principles" established by the fathers could be maintained not by a vague characterological emulation but by "a continuance of the same determined action, by which they were established."[12]

Such action, even if its means were nothing more than a party victory, could be seen as a repetition of the fathers' armed defiance of despotism. Thus, though metaphorically strengthened by the conflict in Kansas, the political antislavery adoption of this model did not depend on that particular open revolt against the federal government; the historian Michael Morrison has shown that the view, already part of the logic of party competition in antebellum America, was also held by the Republicans' party predecessors in the late 1840s, the Free Soilers. The terms in which Morrison describes that party's self-representation apply equally well a decade later: they "cast themselves as the spiritual heirs of the revolutionary forebears," dedicated to refighting "the battle of their ancestors," hence making the struggle over extension of slavery "both a new and an old one."[13]

Morrison's formulation sheds a particularly clear light on how these parties would tailor the traditional conceit to their own world view. The development that made it necessary to fight the revolution over again—the resurgence and consolidation of an oligarchy whose power had been meant to decline and die away—allowed the political antislavery movement to reconcile the overall culture's demand for respect and guardianship over the fathers' achievement with their call to re-perform the Revolution.

In principle, the idea that, in Morrison's words, the battle over the territories was a "reincarnation of an ancient struggle" needn't have altered the basic prescription for generational imitation: the citizenry would merely model themselves, as all sides claimed they should, on the fathers when they marshalled their internal resources to meet the crisis. But the intercourse

between the two time periods was not unidirectional. The confrontation with the Slave Power was not simply a repetition of the Revolution but a stage within it. The earlier event depended as much on the success of the present one as the other way around. This vision of mutuality between the eras is so essential to the 1856 edition of *Leaves of Grass* that the logic sustaining it in party antislavery discourse needs to be isolated.

The principal category of textual-historical classification, where events across time inform and define each other, is typology: an interpretive system based on the reading of events in the New Testament as a realization of what was prefigured in the Hebrew Bible. As the literary critic Kelly Anspaugh puts it, "by the law of typology, old and new, past and present become one in a moment dense with meaning."[14] Indeed, the logic of typology overrides the logic of cause and effect. A later event is the realization of the previous one not because the earlier one brought it about but because of a mode of interpretation that sees both as part of a prophetic design that can be viewed only from the perch of an awakened historical consciousness. For the political antislavery movement, typology helped to define historical memory actively, to set a criterion for protecting the fathers' accomplishment that forbade quietism.

The critic who has done most to show the importance of typology in the American political imaginary is Sacvan Bercovitch. His concern is often with the blending of the worldly and the theological in these constructions; but of more relevance here is his demonstration that the retrospective reading of typology reorders the American past to the purposes of a greater plan. That plan in turn dictates the decisions of the present moment. Under this construction, progressive goals rely more on the patterning of past accomplishments than on an independently generated upward momentum. As he writes of the American jeremiad in general, it "evokes the mythic past not merely to elicit imitation but above all to demand progress . . . to venerate and emulate is to supersede."[15] When the political antislavery movement called for such supersession, the logic of typology prevented this call from simply involving stepping beyond the fathers' achievement; the past kept a vitality that informed and indeed constituted the decisions of the present generation,

stamping it with its true meaning. And the past, in turn, maintained a living form only in the assurance of its present realization.

Bercovitch shows how the Revolution was the pivotal event in nineteenth-century culture's typological reading of American history—both in what it carried from the past and in what it promised, or at least demanded, from the future. Even at the time, the Revolution was itself framed within such a pattern of partial realization, the "long promised, eagerly awaited apocalyptic moment" that, in fulfilling the covenant, guaranteed that the magnolia Dei "would continue, in the image of the Revolution, to 'the end of time.'"[16] Just as the Revolution was itself a reawakening of a fundamental self, later realizations of that event would continue to unveil its true meaning. According to Bercovitch, each generation was in a condition of probation as the nation awaited the fulfillment of that pragmatic and interpretive pattern.

Bercovitch's examination of this period of probation reveals how typology was a variety of historical consciousness that packed prophetic force into the individual moment: the literary critic Ursula Brumm calls typology "a form of prophecy which sets two successive historical events into a reciprocal relation of anticipation and fulfillment."[17] The first event must have already occurred; the second might be on the horizon. Northrop Frye's phrasing in the following explication relates to the Republican warning that the present generation could, through its action, determine the meaning of the Revolution:

> What typology really is as a mode of thought, what it both assumes and leads to, is a theory of history, or more accurately of historical process: an assumption that there is some meaning or point to history, and that sooner or later some event or events will occur which will indicate what that meaning or point is, and so become an antitype of what has happened previously.[18]

The party antislavery movement both awaited that revelatory moment and warned that while it could justify the fathers, it could just as easily contravene the father's purpose and besmirch their memory. The pressure implied by Frye's phrase "some event or events will occur" they accepted as the burden of their generation: to discover finally what meaning their action would bestow on the past.

Indeed, ancestor worship devolved a specific charge on the people to join the founders' endeavor and thus redeem it. By the logic of typology, the same later event that brings to fruition an earlier one also reveals the true meaning of that earlier event. When the later event therefore was yet to occur, it fell within the purview of the succeeding generation to determine that retrospective meaning through performance. What "was bequeathed to us by our forefathers" was not decided at the time but would be now.[19] Above all else, the present generation had the duty not to tarnish retrospectively the fathers' accomplishment. Since one way or another the world wrought in the present would be the antitype (the later event to which the original event is the type) for the fathers' deeds, only the present generation could prevent the fathers' deeds from becoming the prefigurement of a universal slave republic. One atypical iteration of this fear, hidden in an apparent but deceptive critique of the fathers, measures in its very misdirection the burden that party antislavery warnings placed on the people: "If this [the extension of slavery] was the boon our fathers fought for, we humbly submit that they had better been employed in some more honorable and praiseworthy business."[20] The passage could easily be mistaken for a Garrisonian effort to expose the founders' true impulses as the source of national sin, but its rebuke is not of the people described within it. Its very refusal to join the chorus of celebration—its self-conscious relinquishment of a rhetorical obligation—conveys a critique of the present generation, whose crimes entail depriving the fathers of tribute by bringing their sacrifices to such a baleful end. The usual passionate homages to the fathers themselves fall away if the people do not bestow a redemptive meaning on their acts.

More often, such representations of the present as the fulfillment of the Revolution embraced the legacy and celebrated the esteem the new generation would pass on to the departed, as in Marshall Pike's Republican campaign poem:

> We are true sons of Freedom,
> And proud of the name:
> Our sires fought for Liberty,
> And we'll do the same![21]

"The same" in this passage, in other contexts a deflating and anticlimactic ending to a stanza, emits an emphatic force strengthened by the rhyme with

"name." Together the two words define the present as the antitype to the type of the Revolution, as the later event that fulfills and completes its antecedent. And that accomplishment enshrines "the name" of the "true sons of Freedom" as a permanent designation marking the commitment to imitative action. The pride comes partly from being able to claim unreservedly that the fathers' goal was freedom. Extracting that meaning from their sacrifice depended on placing the sacrifice in a narrative trajectory continuing into the present: thus, a piece in the most important organ of the new coalition that would form the Republican party claimed in 1854 that "the ideas which exalt the struggle for American independence" prove that "the Revolutionary contest was by no means ended in 1782—on the contrary, it is still in progress, with very much to be achieved before it can be brought to a conclusion."[22] What was at stake, then, was the question of whether the current generation could be the vessel for such a conclusion. The present fulfilled the past in one way or another, as if the intervening years merely sowed the seed for a new fashioning of the nation.

Practical consequences blended with interpretive perils in this construction. The expansion of the nation gave a spatial expression to the present generation's role of successor to the original founders. If it did not accept the task of again being original, it would by definition annul what the past had accomplished, as in the following poem's reference to the number of colonies and states. The odd mixture of passivity and agency in this poem's reading of the intervening eighty years implies that the present alone displays the burdens that have lain dormant for that long but have now come alive with the accomplished "deeds" that will reignite on a new stage, whether for good or ill:

> But now thirteen [13] has been transposed,
> And changed to thirty-one [31]
> Let not the sons also reverse
> The deeds their sires have done.[23]

Expansion collapses into unravelling here. What should be the source of the nation's pride becomes an omen of the present's disfiguring work on what had seemed to be accomplished. This is not, of course, a reflection of the traditional belief (often put forward by conservatives in the two previous party systems) that territorial growth threatens a republic's survival; rather, it is a warning not to make the progress of the last eighty years seem in

retrospect the preparatory stage to a revolution in reverse, founding a slave empire on cumulative apostasy. As this passage illustrates, campaign poetry often minimized the distinction between the incipient and the completed in order to lay the stress on the repetition itself, what Northrop Frye defines as the kind of repetition that makes new.[24]

Without that repetition, in retrospect the patriots, in their sacrifice, merely triggered a concatenation of events that would end with a despotism far more regressive and absolute than the relatively mild colonial vassalage they had overthrown. By the logic of typology, the living could vindicate the founders' hold over the future by placing their past actions in a narrative sequence that would establish them as imitable. That sequence would take its momentum not from a discredited and corrupted causal chain, not from a gradual linear process, but from a symbolic redoing. Repetition would offer a retrospective redemption. Even the silliest Republican ditty, using a temporal rather than a spatial numerological pun, could take its logic from this construction:

> In seventeen hundred seventy six, I need not tell you how
> Our fathers won the battle that we are fighting now;
> But seventy *six* and fifty *six* have got *two* sixes in,
> And when the sixes double, they're mighty sure to win.[25]

The cheerful tone of this passage reinforces one of its counterintuitive conclusions: that the Revolution ends up succeeding because of, not despite, the need to repeat it. The events of the past and the events of the present double their strength in union with each other—the first giving a model to the second and the second a justification to the first. Each presented a test to the other passed by the same party that posed it: a test of long-term resistance against the forces of decline for the fathers and a test of the right to inheritance for the sons. Keeping the two deeds in a kind of equipoise maintained these mutually defining functions. Thus, the tract appropriately entitled *Sons of Liberty in 1776 and 1856* reduced all of history to the two events: "The sons of liberty grappled with and overthrew tyranny then. The sons of liberty must do it now."[26] Even the typical distinction between parent and heir disappears in this construction's parallelism: the generations join in the appellation "sons of liberty," which subordinates the single line of descent to the responsibility of generational renewal. All that matters is the restored bond between "then" and "now."

The need to fight the Revolution again makes the historical event a creature of the present and thus the people's own. The original acts performed by the fathers are thus transformed from dangerously partial measures into the framework for confronting an enemy whose despotic nature presents a purer challenge than they had had the honor to face—from the trigger for an unending line of concession to its antidote. The people can realize this interpretive scheme, however, only by transplanting the fathers' energies into their own constitutions: "The spirit that nerved our fathers in the days of our country's earliest struggle for liberty must nerve the arms and heart of their children now against a far more relentless tyranny."[27] The fathers can survive only in the present life of their rightful heirs, and those heirs can gain their status only by redirecting the fathers' energies through themselves into the contest facing the country currently—"to take the responsibilities attached to" the present moment and "to keep step with the requirements of the age."[28] The return to the Revolution is not a reversion to the past, as the historian Major Wilson at times suggests,[29] but a capturing of a primal American self, whose survival by definition depends on the full functioning of the present as a vehicle to the future.

Whitman's free-soil editorials from 1847 show how this reemergence traces a line of inheritance capable of supplanting the usurpers' cunning gradual adaptations of democratic forms. Praising the Wilmot Proviso that would ban slavery in the territories acquired from Mexico, Whitman links it to the long chain of American founding, whose intercalating bonds Bercovitch has analyzed in his study of American typology: "Jefferson was as much the originator of the proviso as Columbus was the discoverer of this continent."[30] This potential redemptive continuity faces the enemy of an actual retrogression, one that also erases the difference between the Revolution and the present, but by dint of apostasy. "Have the ages so rolled backward, and humanity with them, that what we went to war to *stop*, seventy years ago, we shall now keep up a war [with Mexico] to *advance*?"[31] Steadfastly viewing Columbus's arrival, the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson's Northwest Ordinance, and the political movement to stop the extension of slavery as a single moment is itself the remedy to this outrage.

Thus, to John Hale in 1854, who two years earlier had been the Free Democrat whom Whitman had urged to run for president on his party's ticket, the crisis over the territories will represent the final reading of the past, the

final chance to give the English colonists' actions the causal efficacy that had seemed inherent only in the impulse that had motivated them. Those people settled only the land; the current generation will "settle" the question whether that action amounted to anything more than fostering a new field for corruption: "it has fallen upon the men of this generation to settle the question whether, after all, the men who left persecuted homes in England . . . had engaged in an enterprise that was to affect favorably or unfavorably the interests of mankind in this world forever."[32] Hale's "after all" carries a special charge here, becoming, in its pairing with "forever," more than a mere emphatic signal: it suggests that all history had become concentrated within the present moment of crisis. The actions of America's various founders were finally to receive their fixed status as blessing or curse, and a generation as fleeting as any other was nevertheless to decide for all earlier and later generations one way or another the contribution of the nation to world history—the same outcome that trembles in the balance in *The Eighteenth Presidency!* The antebellum editions of *Leaves of Grass*, particularly the 1856 edition, set similar terms for the charge it gives to the people. That charge is summed up most economically in Henry Ward Beecher's call: "We must walk again over the course of history."[33]

Beecher's directive owes much to what the historian Major Wilson emphasizes when he describes the task political antislavery set for themselves as "peel[ing] away the evil accretions of time . . . to reaffirm the primitive principles of the republic." Yet Beecher's (or Whitman's) walking again over history is not merely corrective or purgative. Its aim was not, in Wilson's formulation, to "restore the freedom of an eternal present"[34] but to restore an active, positioned present to the goals of a historicized freedom. The people must not so much reclaim the past as reclaim the present as a medium of performance that comes to life only within a broader series of actions over time. If starved of the oxygen provided by the broader trajectory, the present can nurture only death. If, on the other hand, the people commit to "walk[ing] again over the course of history," the present is stirred up into fertile ground and is restored to its proper function as the medium of the people's fulfillment.

The political antislavery representation of a recurrent crisis thus interdicted the conservative view of the present as the embracing vessel of institutions and structures that must be protected for the republic's safety. The present could win back the energy properly belonging to it only in its capacity as

an antitype whose purpose was ready to be realized in action. In the 1856 *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman first valorizes this positive model of the political antislavery movement in preparation for showing how his countrymen have betrayed it. Through that pattern of development, the edition dramatizes how the conservative neglect of the real duty imposed by the Revolution becomes a block to the energies the cycle seeks to unleash.

In his long prose preface to the 1855 edition, Whitman had affirmed the principle that "the greatest poet forms the consistence of what is to be from what has been and is. . . . [H]e says to the past, Rise and walk before me that I may realize you" (1855, vi). The poet must invoke the past so that its presence depends on his own prophetic voice; Whitman thus establishes a principle of obligatory mutual intimacy between the stages of history—a principle that runs through all editions of *Leaves of Grass*, yet it is most pronounced in the 1856 edition. Several poems lay the theoretical foundations for the principle. They do that partly to provide a determinative context for the two poems that bring the principle home to the actual crisis facing the nation. These two come late in the edition and acquire their significance partly from the earlier celebration of past and present's mutual interdependence: "Poem of Remembrances" and the poem eventually entitled "A Boston Ballad" show what must happen when that principle is obeyed and when it is flouted. Together they set the stakes for the particular kind of generational rededication urged by antislavery parties. The earlier poems support that diagnosis by eschewing a simple reduction of the present to a mere link in a causal chain.

"Poem of the Last Explanation of Prudence" offers a theoretical framework for the tests applied to the people in the more topical poems. This poem first appeared in the 1856 edition but borrows heavily from Whitman's prose preface to the 1855 edition. Its placement in the newer edition illustrates not only how Whitman redeploys material to construct a new narrative pattern in 1856 but also how the more programmatic poems culled from the 1855 preface acquire a stronger resonance from the more narratively rich poems surrounding them in the new edition. In its tone, "Poem of Prudence" is every bit as polemical as the topical poems: its didactic purpose is not shrouded by satire or celebration. The poem urges a redefinition of prudent action,

and—though it only indirectly adduces specific cases where the redefinition could be applied—within the context of the dispute between conservatives and the political antislavery movement in the free states, the redefinition in and of itself vibrates with polemical purpose.

The new political antislavery party felt the need to upend long-standing conservative definitions of prudence. Calls for acquiescence in the compromise measures of 1850, for instance, often contrasted "wise and prudent" action with the excitement of agitation.[35] Even Northerners with abstract antislavery principles should accept that living up to them in deeds amounted to "acting prematurely," the recourse of "rash men, to be avoided."[36] To the political antislavery movement, this endless deferral to a riper time not only shirked the duty of offering a counterforce to the unceasing usurpations of the Slave Power but failed to grasp the representative—well-nigh symbolic—nature of political action. Thanks to that failure, timidity and reserve passing itself off as prudence would soon irreversibly define the free-state character. To Republicans and their predecessors, such tactics betrayed the present as much as the future to the forces of decline; they came to be seen as a regulatory mechanism that the political force of slavery had planted into the system of free-state response, so that liberation from the constraint itself constituted a victory over slavery's aggressions. In this rhetorical contest, a piece appearing in the *New York Evening Post* tied its new definition of prudence in with abandoning "etiquettes and proprieties" to accept "the shock of cold waters gushing from the unscaled depths":

> Faith is the true prudence, because it is keen-sighted and far-sighted; looks not at immediate and transient consequences, but at final and enduring results; accepts present failure, and gives up present gain, for the sake of future and real success.[37]

This "true prudence" is the representational goal of Whitman's poem. It travels toward that goal by tapping also the antislavery model of expressive and reflective political action.

The trend to seek only immediate gain and safety annuls the future-breeding power of labor analyzed in the previous chapter: fetishizing and misapprehending the present disjoins long-term historical purpose from daily republic-building activity. *The Eighteenth Presidency!* similarly emphasizes the breaking of that nexus; but a different antislavery critique often found

economic and political impulses all too intimately bound together through their common source in what Josiah Quincy called "the timidity incident to the spirit of commerce in the North." The free states' political posture was in this construction seen as an extension of the ahistorical short-term calculations that run a commercial society—where the same policies that reflected slavery's hold on the free states' economies also suited in their devising a political class's natural inclination to take the path of least resistance (and greatest profit) in day-to-day negotiations. Employing this expressive model, the political antislavery movement had condemned for years such conservatives as Daniel Webster, who (again in Quincy's words) "know little of the past, care nothing for the future, and regard only the present."[38] Whitman's redefinition of prudence carries the weight of this charge.

"Poem of Prudence" comes around to this view by way of Transcendentalist principles but also summons up the basic terms of typology for its resolution. It begins by distinguishing between kinds of prudence and setting its own sights on "the prudence that suits immortality." That variety puts aside immediate short-term consequences for effects obtaining in a different sphere and on a different temporal track—what it calls "the indirect life-time" (1856, 257). Prudence at this stage of the poem seems to lodge its effects exclusively on the individual's soul, but as it extends beyond the deeds and misdeeds of a single person, the poem abjures the examples it had selected as deceptively delimiting:

> No specification is necessary—all that a male
> or female does, that is vigorous, benevolent,
> clean, is so much profit to him or her in the
> unshakable order of the universe, and through
> the whole scope of it forever.
>
> Who has been wise, receives interest,
> Savage, felon, President, judge, prostitute, farmer,
> sailor, mechanic, young, old, it is the same,
> The interest will come round—all will come
> round. (1856, 258)

At work here, of course, is in part the leveling typical of Whitman's democratic reveries; but, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the reference

to the president in Whitman's antebellum poems tends to admit into the political realm what the poet had been treating as personal, in turn imbuing the political with many of the more intimate characteristics and functions he has already anatomized. As a result, when the speaker returns to examples, they fan out to embrace the decisions of the nation, making "the interest" that "will come round" the engine of national destiny. The soul-building and identity-forming function of individual actions is thereby extended to the nation and to the people. It is at this stage that the poem turns aside from linear causality to redefine effects as operating on a more reciprocal and dynamic temporal grid: "Singly, wholly, to affect now, affected their time, will forever affect, all of the past, and all of the present, and all of the future" (258). The list begins with local, individual deeds committed in a larger context of disaster or crisis—brave acts of war, aid to fugitive slaves, the "self-denial that stood steady and aloof" on shipwrecks (259). This emphasis on individual acts of integrity leaves its associational residue when the list extends to nations and historical precedents, as if the interest accruing to the soul applies also to the character and legacy bestowed on the world by actual polities and world actors.

This extension then allows the speaker to turn away from the distracting passage of time as a steady flow in order to place the true deeds of history in their proper relationship to each other. Single moments and their agents alone take the benefit from the single deed or thought, while this accumulating exchange back and forth between agent and effect replaces a simple model of the world's steady transformation; in this mutual exchange, the untouchability of the past and elusiveness of the future vanish in the return to the stage of the like performers.

> All that is henceforth to be thought or done by
> you, whoever you are, or by any one,
> These inure, have inured, shall inure, to the
> identities from which they sprang, or shall
> spring. (1856, 260)

At the level of statement, this passage seems to claim nothing more than that thoughts and actions rebound to the universe; but the tumbling out of agents and tenses in a kind of false parallelism creates the effect of affirming a greater blending, where each act awaits its fulfillment in a parallel boon

it gives to those who perform it. With actors no longer considered merely the source of their own action, identities accumulate retroactively and prospectively. As a result, world history becomes a series of consummations that form their own genealogical line, annulling time's steady trajectory of defeat, which now is consigned to the delusion that the present moment is a simple accumulation of equalized moments from the past.

> Did you guess anything lived only its moment?
> The world does not so exist—no parts palpable
> or impalpable so exist,
> No consummation exists without being from some
> long previous consummation, and that from
> some other, without the farthest conceivable
> one coming a bit nearer the beginning than
> any. (1856, 260)

The circular nature of the consummations also forbids the isolation of one act of consummation as a simple outcome of the past. What is explicitly rejected here is a model of incipience and realization, as each consummation has its own integrity even as it depends on future and past. This vision of a chain of mutually dependent consummations tracks in its general outlines the Republican claim that the Revolution was at once perfect and uncompleted—at once a victory and a potential mockery. An event gains its status as original from being a constant prod not to see any subsequent repetitions as themselves a realization. At the same time, it holds up repetition, not realization, as the only framework that does not mystify.

The declaration "the world does not so exist" will come to define the spectral world of "A Boston Ballad," where the model offered by "Prudence" so completely fails to color the people's perceptions as to reduce the organic world to a dumb show. Before that point, however, the 1856 edition has presented a positive practical application of the model offered in "Prudence" in the survival of the revolutionary spirit in Europe. It includes the two well-known poems about failed European revolutionaries that appear in most editions of *Leaves of Grass*; they have, however, a particular function in the 1856 edition,

a function owing in part to the positioning of "Liberty Poem" immediately before "A Boston Ballad," which itself is followed by another prescriptive poem, "A Poem of Remembrances." "A Boston Ballad" stands as a kind of dead weight at the center of the poems that surround it, forming a chasm into which the world of the cycle threatens to sink. Despite its vividly satirical representations, it gives an account of America's real-life degradation that places all the heavier burden of responsibility on the prescriptions the other poems offer to lift off that weight. As the 1856 cycle is constructed, then, those poems are meant to offer the remedy to what the pessimistic poem diagnoses.

The two European poems forbid mourning historical defeats on the grounds that the defeat itself forecasts the victory. "A Boston Ballad" mocks celebration of the Revolution's victory by representing that victory as, in fact, despotism's opposite and irreversible triumph. In other words, typology is at the heart of these poems: an ultimately suppressed revolt is a type for the antitype of world liberation in the optimistic poems. Victory, registered with self-satisfaction, ushers in an antitype that retrospectively annuls that victory in "A Boston Ballad." Whitman takes full advantage of this ironic contrast: the success of the fallen and imprisoned in Europe bitterly casts a spotlight on the defeat of the contented and pampered so-called republican citizens. In its structure, the 1856 edition, far more than any other, invites us to view the represented world of these poems in relationship to each other.

The cycle's first poem of revolution, "Poem of the Dead Young Men of Europe," in its textual strategies stands as the mirror image to "The Boston Ballad." Whereas "A Boston Ballad" represents a world where cheerfully frenetic activity, when rightly perceived, expresses the stillness of death and stagnation, "Poem of the Dead Young Men of Europe" takes a world marked on its surface by the stillness of death and discovers the active life force that will reanimate its apparently empty forms. It recasts the defeat in the 1848 revolutions as a prophecy that the force that gave those revolutions impetus will be reincarnated. The poem's strategy is to relegate the actual victories of the counterrevolutionaries to the surface phenomenon they have left behind, while calling for the reader to sense the truly active spirit lying dormant behind those images. As is so often the case with Whitman, this reading of the present depends on various admonitions to the reader. The poem ends with the demand that the reader, now more or less equivalent to the fallen revolutionaries themselves, "be not weary of watching" (1856, 254) the aban-

doned house whose true master will one day return. The metaphor of the house—so often in the period a symbol of a permanent and unchangeable establishment—communicates the paradoxical nature of the affirmation. That final image calls not for the overthrow of the existing order but for a restoration of its true disguised authority. The seeming passivity of that stance again positions the poem as the double of "A Boston Ballad," where the representative Yankee, Jonathan, ends contentedly awaiting nothing, hands in pocket, pleased with the bargain that has destroyed the impetus of liberty and locked him in a permanent present. Yet the apparent passivity of "Poem of the Dead Young Men of Europe" vanishes when waiting is represented as serving memory, the faculty that is repressed and mocked in "A Boston Ballad."

Earlier in the poem, referring to the revolution itself, the speaker had instructed various apostrophized forces to "Turn back unto this day." By calling together in the apostrophe "hope and faith" on the one hand and "many a sickened heart" (252) on the other, this second verse paragraph turns the vessels of despair into the proper home for the faithful—even if it is a home, as in the poem's final conceit, to which they will return in a different person. Memory transforms defeat into the promise of resurrection; the faculties permitting revolution reintegrate at the altar of death. The poem's refusal to represent the individual lives and hearts as mere forerunners of their eventual heirs is key to its typological strategy: the poem forecasts not just a steady train of historical progress, where later generations take up the principles thwarted by their forebears. It offers life to the forebears themselves: they come back to life in the realization of their ideals. As in the Republican vision of the fathers realized, vindicated, and apotheosized in the determination of their sons to complete the revolution they began, the present has the power to turn the agents of the past into either the immortal actors on the stage or ghosts whose very completed achievements have been annulled by treachery. This second outcome dramatized in "A Boston Ballad" comes into sharp relief by its opposite.

"Liberty Poem," eventually entitled "To a Foiled European Revolutionary," first appears in the 1856 edition, but more significant than its originality to that edition is its placement. In no other edition but one does it immediately precede "A Boston Ballad": that is the 1867 edition, by which point the nation's degradation in 1854 (the date attached in later editions to "A Boston Ballad"

to announce its obscured topical narrative) had been superseded by the Civil War and emancipation, whereas the possibility of redemption in 1856 was as uncertain as *The Eighteenth Presidency!* suggests. What remained a danger from the past in 1867 was, according to the political antislavery diagnosis, still the actual national condition in 1856. Moreover, in the 1867 edition the pair of poems do not appear within immediate proximity to the other poem of failed revolution, nor are they followed by "Poem of Remembrances." "Liberty Poem" plays an entirely different role in its original position in 1856. What in other editions appears to be a cheering tribute to liberty as a force whose death is unimaginable becomes the opposite: a warning that such a death overshadows Whitman's native land. The majority of the irreal conditions set down at the end of the poem to suggest rhetorically that liberty is safe long term will in fact be met in "A Boston Ballad":

> When there are no more memories of the lovers
> of the whole of the nations of the world,
> The lovers' names scouted in the public gatherings
> by the lips of the orators,
> Boys not christened after them, but christened
> after traitors and murderers instead,
> Laws for slaves sweet to the taste of people—
> the slave-hunt acknowledged,
> . . . . . .
> Then shall the instinct of liberty be discharged
> from that part of the earth,
> Then shall the infidel and the tyrant come into
> possession. (1856, 269–70)

The sequence of hypothetical losses bases the people's embrace of slave laws, and specifically the capture of fugitive slaves, on a failure first of memory, then of political reverence, and finally of genealogical transmission. "A Boston Ballad" collapses these sequential markers into a single moment but then reinstates the line of inheritance through loss, making Americans the true heirs of a murdered instinct. The later poem thus "discharges" the instinct of liberty and gives the tyrants a kind of possession that is securely planted in the hollowed-out subjects who unknowingly embody it. "Liberty Poem" anticipates the affective system that will undergird this embodiment: the

hint of decadence in the laws of slavery being "sweet to the taste of people" anticipates the blending of obliviousness, indulgent patriotic pleasure, and a complacency that reduces the people to something less than human in the satirical poem.

The phrasing "sweet to the taste" is deleted entirely in all subsequent editions of *Leaves of Grass*, and indeed only the 1856 version makes reference specifically to the "laws for slaves" and the fruit of the Fugitive Slave Law itself, "the slave-hunt." In other ways the 1856 version of the poem alone insists on its bond with "A Boston Ballad." In that edition, the lines given above end "Liberty Poem," whereas in 1860 Whitman includes what would become a permanent addition made up of the speaker's reflection. The final words in 1856, on the other hand, serve almost as an informal proem to the poem that follows: by ending "Liberty Poem" abruptly with the tyrant hypothetically receiving his final and permanent patrimony, the 1856 poem sets up the perverted retrospective model of inheritance about to be fully dissected.

When placed where it is in the 1856 edition, "Liberty Poem," then, demands to be read as if its fantastical account of liberty's death has already been realized in "A Boston Ballad." This reading depends on taking "A Boston Ballad" as growing beyond its original satirical purpose when it assumes its position within Whitman's second ordering of his poems in *Leaves of Grass*. Elsewhere I have interpreted "A Boston Ballad" as a bleakly comic realization of the conservatives' call for an internalized restraint; in the interpretation offered here, "A Boston Ballad" represents the nation as it must be understood if the historical pattern bemoaned in *The Eighteenth Presidency!* is left unchecked. That tract had driven home the irony that Europe seemed a more proper home for what America had ushered into the world. And "A Boston Ballad" reveals what that trend must ultimately mean for America's relationship to its past: present-day America becomes the antitype not for the Revolution, not even for a counter-Revolution, but for the Revolution's blood-drained other that the present generation has itself brought to a ghostly life after the fact.

The two occlusions that critics have noticed in "A Boston Ballad" are closely related. The poem uses the rendition of a fugitive slave in June of 1854 for its setting yet rigorously leaves out of its representation the Fugitive Slave Law

or the actual fugitive slave, Anthony Burns, the key figure in that event, who had the most immediate interest in its outcome. Ivy Wilson, for instance, places at the center of his interpretation that Whitman "consign[s] his African American to the veiled recesses of the poem."[39] Just as rigorously excluded from the account is the real-life rebellion of certain Bostonians against the rendition (a rebellion that involved fatalities and received a mixed reception from the multifarious world of antislavery) or even the sullen but passive objections of the majority. As Klammer puts it, "Whitman had to contradict what he probably knew to be the truth about Boston's response." When he turns to the other exclusion, of Burns himself, Klammer at once confirms and answers Erkkila's point that a subtext of racism underlies that choice by observing that the poem follows typical antislavery representations of the Fugitive Slave Law as jeopardizing "the freedom of Northern white communities."[40] Klammer presents solid corroborating material from Whitman showing his enthusiasm for this construction. Yet the antislavery interpretation of the law had other features that can also explain the poem's marked evasions—features that make "Northern white communities" less victims than collaborators or, more precisely, victims through their collaboration.

The poem erases these historical responses for the same reason it leaves unregistered the actual rendition: so it can tap the rhetoric of degradation in antislavery condemnations of the law in their pure form, attributing the degradation to the failure of historical transmission that is its true impetus. Those condemnations wove the actual instrumentalities of the law—its use of federal troops, its requirement that the people cooperate with the law, its abrogation of state sovereignty, its subjection of individuals to military authority, its pursuit of human beings over land consecrated to freedom—into a more comprehensive topography of a new America to which Whitman's poem then adds satirical intensification. Whitman evidently has more interest in embodying this world in a consistent narrative rendition than in accurately reflecting the citizens' real-life responses. The actual rendition of Burns by federal officers comes through only in the bizarrely complacent and unfocused perception of it by living Bostonians, so complacent that the event becomes indistinguishable from the failure of outrage that attends it. Far from evading the consequences of the law by overlooking Burns, the poem takes this failure of perception as the final consequence of the free-state apostasy that allowed the law to pass.

The other well-known poem about Burns's legal kidnapping, Whittier's "The Rendition"—written by a figure with stronger antislavery credentials than Whitman—similarly erases from its picture Burns himself and the Bostonian resistance. (Burns appears only as a personified Liberty who "[m]arched handcuffed down that sworded street."[41]) Other parallels between the two poems point to their common participation in a broader pattern within antislavery fictionalizations of the Fugitive Slave Law. According to those representations, the law had leeched not just Boston but all American space of the organic life fertilized by the fathers' blood and maintained by succeeding generations' labor. As the Republican Anson Burlingame put it, the law required Americans to descend from their role as "demigods of enterprise and energy" in order "to go bounding over the very graves of the political fathers catching women and children to bear them back to a condition worse than death."[42] The land that conserved, embodied, and transmitted the story of the nation's founding so as to become a field of new heroic progress had been reseeded to become the grid instead for a new colonization. One poem denouncing the law frames this baleful regression as a narrative overwriting, which takes up a common theme of patriotic orations—the land itself commemorating and holding in reserve for further use the story of revolutionary sacrifice and success—in order to expose how that boon will be wiped out by the call of barbarism.

> In the North they've many a battle ground
> Where men for liberty fell;
> But soon the bloodhound's vengeful voice,
> A different tale shall tell.[43]

The people lose their heritage when their own compliance encodes a story antithetical to the Revolution, one where the inhuman howl of the chase will channel the only available voice for a "tale," once it has reduced the fathers' sacrifice to a dead history that can no longer be resounded. In this context, the most ominous word in the stanza is "soon": the fathers' voice disappears when the isolatable event of their victory yields place to the perpetually recurring voice of the bloodhound, vengeful alike to the escaping slave and to a land freely given over to slave-catching purposes.

Similarly, in Whittier's "The Rendition," the traumatized speaker, having confirmed the reality of the event, feels "the solid earth beneath [his] feet"

reel "fluid as the sea." The new earth absorbs a corpse—the mother of liberty, to whom the speaker makes one last futile appeal before realizing he "stood upon her grave!"[44] Whitman's witnesses are spared that fate. They survive the "different tale" that has overwritten the land by refusing to hear it. It is a tale told through, and hence disguised by, the supplanted story of revolutionary sacrifice, now so perverted and distorted as to simultaneously drown out and echo the bloodhounds. Fundamentally, the poem renounces narrative: there is no "there" and "then" within the United States. Instead, the poem posits a new "here," where the draining of the fathers' story from the land has already been completed, and the soil is thus primed for a new informing national myth the people cannot distinguish from the heroic one.

"A Boston Ballad" exposes distortions of historical memory—reversals of the proper typological relationship between past and present, between origin and fulfillment, between revolution and preservation. In the poem, what Ursula Brumm calls typology's "reciprocal relation between anticipation and fulfillment" breaks down and is then built back up in a grotesque inversion of the ideal. Whitman borrows and extends the antislavery representation of a nation remade by the outrageous law so as to paint a dystopian ideal of oblivion, where the historical "consummations" of "Poem of Prudence" have been fetishized and severed from their sires and heirs. The bizarre perceptual errors in the poem are the logical outcome of a failure to follow the prescriptions Whitman proclaims in "Poem of Prudence" and the European revolution poems. Once the present is seen as detachable and the past as achieved, the nation must descend to the crimes it commits, yet scarcely notices, through the Fugitive Slave Law. The poem figures the failure of memory spatially. Its imaginative world is organized around four possible combinations related to freedom of movement: the two most important are the voluntary, self-chosen immobility and involuntary, unconscious immobility.

The 1856 version of the poem is more closely linked to the European poems not only in its placement but also in its title. Though referred to throughout this chapter by the better known title "A Boston Ballad," this first title given to the poem comes from the edition analyzed here and is the only one in any edition to include the word "apparitions": "Poem of Apparitions in Boston, the 78th Year of These States." In all three of the antebellum editions those apparitions are introduced in the first stanza, a passage that loses its opening position to the immediate introduction of the "I" figure ("I rose this morn-

ing early") in all postwar editions (a change that also thereby sacrifices the clear framing narrative that makes Jonathan stand out in the antebellum versions). In the first, 1855 edition, the apparitions are introduced in a way that conforms to most readers' experience of the poem's narrative sequence, as figures that appear in response to what the "I" figure sees and misinterprets: "and the phantoms afterward" (1855, 89). For the first time in the 1856 edition the apparitions come out less in order than as necessary attendants on the federal troops that are described as a coequal part of the scene: "and the apparitions copiously tumbling" (1856, 271). In this version, then, the poem ironically, because partially, fulfills the promise of resurrection and reincarnation made in the optimistic poems of supposedly failed European revolutions, especially "Poem of the Dead Young Men of Europe." In its opening lines, "A Boston Ballad" could seem to promise the dynamic of a force met by a counterforce: for each step of the federal troops, one of the revolutionary heroes will appear to oppose it—just as the European poems forecast that the material instruments of oppression will fade into powerlessness when they finally meet their match in the unquenchable instinct of liberty. The terms of victory offered in the European poems are promised, only to be withdrawn as the 1856 "A Boston Ballad" unfolds.

"A Boston Ballad" begins with the speaker taking up the responsibility of commemoration that the next poem, "Poem of Remembrances," demands, and his logistical maneuvers to fulfill that duty presage the national unconscious renunciation of the Revolution; in his benighted contentment lurk the national fallacies that permitted the law to come into being. The speaker starts off delighted that the pleasure he takes in celebrating the achievement of the fathers in a patriotic parade has found the perfect occasion—indeed, he reads that occasion in the signs before him. The mixture of complacency and initiative he displays in seeking out the right vantage point implicates his prearranged perspective in the outrage that he only later truly witnesses. Here the supplanted weapons of the European poems come back to life in two different capacities: they are in fact the tools of the rendition, but the speaker experiences them as emblems of the patriots' sacrifice—with the completion and end of the sacrifice reflected in their transformation into ceremonial baubles. Even before we learn the true purpose of the march, the terms on which the speaker seeks to enjoy the weapons are suspect. He takes the Revolution as the source for an organized spectacle in relationship

to which he need only position himself aright for its glories to be displayed before him. His struggle to find the best place to "stand" anticipates in its very patriotic enthusiasm the compliant rigidity of the compromise-bound citizenry with which the poem ends. His determination to perceive the Revolution as an achievement distilled into spectacle itself sets the condition for Burns's rendition:

> Here's a good place at the corner, I must stand
> and see the show.
>
> I love to look on the stars and stripes, I hope the
> fifes will play Yankee Doodle.
>
> How bright shine the cutlasses of the foremost
> troops!
> Every man holds his revolver, marching stiff
> through Boston town. (1856, 271)

The speaker's ironic misreading of the troops' stiffness, in fact impelled by obedience and military discipline, as the coordination demanded of performers turns out to be accurate at another level: the rigidity reflects how individual responsibility to the Revolution has been sublimated and lost in systematic dutifulness. The President's marshal indeed enacts a mere recreation, because it traces its physical authority back to a period to which it has lost any more vital connection. The marshal's empty allegiance to the nation finds its mirror image in the speaker's ambiguous "I must stand," phrasing meant ostensibly to convey the plan for a perfect vantage point but catching the associational contamination of obedience and passing it on to the act of observing itself.

The speaker's naming his chosen vantage point as "here" establishes how the rest of the poem will chart the spaces that together make up its universe. Perspective does more than orient the world; it sifts through what is real and what is irreal until the scene matches, in its visible signs, its essential properties. The denuded universe that survives this sorting process is then mapped by the deictic marker that recurs at the poem's pivotal points: "here." We have seen earlier in this chapter how "here" recurred in Republican appeals that drove home the historical irony of a people shackled by a worse incarnation of the

same enemy they had defeated in revolution some eighty years earlier. "Here" indicates a coincidence in place, meant ultimately to drive home an ideal coincidence in a historical role that has in fact been betrayed. In Whitman's poem, "here" similarly transmits an ironic sting, which will be analyzed later in its individual occurrences but which can be fruitfully compared in general with the European revolution poems. Those poems adjure the reader not to mistake the abandoned structures, which is all that the defeated revolutions have left visible, for the world's true life force. "A Boston Ballad," on the other hand, insists, through cumulative markings that convey different facets of the people's passivity, that the borders of its narrowing perceptual universe finally amount to the universe itself.

It comes as no surprise that the speaker experiences the arrival of the phantoms as part of the "show," for he has collapsed all stages of the revolutionary endeavor, including his own, into a commemorative ritual. The ghosts themselves he describes as "antiques of the same." In doing so, he ironically perverts an ideal examined earlier: he equates the revolutionary heroes with their heirs but only in order to reduce both of them to the agents of an imitative gesture. The identity between the two in his initial perception reflects the folding in of time that plagues the speaker early in the poem: he finds no need to remember in order to commemorate. He simply expects the ghosts to appear as part of his due; they "belong," to use his later term, as players in a show that flattens out distinct achievements in a holiday indulgence. As expressed in the line immediately before this passage, he awoke early to "get betimes in Boston town" (271), and his punctuality alone marks the limit of his temporal responsibility. Compare this to "Poem of the Dead Young Men of Europe," where after the initial account of the suppression of the reawakened people, the readers are instructed, "Turn back unto this day, and make yourselves afresh" (252). The speaker of "A Boston Ballad" seeks not a new self born of a proper grasp of his role within a still active series of events but a ritual confirmation of his political identity. He mistakes that quest as an homage to a past that he, in that very misidentification, nullifies.

The speaker snaps out of this spell by an initial misperception that in fact accurately represents the true dynamics of the situation. The need to interpret the ghosts' futile efforts at protest (futile because unobserved except by him) awakens the speaker to the actual rendition he had earlier mistaken:

Do you
mistake your crutches for fire-locks, and
level them?

If you blind your eyes with tears you will not see
the President's marshal. (1856, 272)

The ironies and reversals that this passage initiates proliferate almost endlessly and seem themselves to stir the speaker into adopting a true prophetic (though satirical) voice. The error the speaker attributes to the ghosts reverses his own earlier misperception of military equipment for a celebration's costumes and props. It is as if projecting that error onto the new performers in the show clears his own head of his delusion. The ghosts' error, of course, is in fact no perceptual error at all but rather a sudden recognition of their helplessness. And that helplessness is laid at the door of the present generation, leaving the fathers' only option to be blinding their eyes to that apostasy through the medium of their very outrage (the tears). The speaker's disabling tears in Whittier's "The Rendition" here spring from the founders themselves, and the present generation's blind incapacitating of them follows the chain of responsibility the Republicans' typological system assigns. The ghosts' own blindness is merely a hypothetical projection, as the speaker acknowledges when he begins—but then stops—to usher them into the hall of mirrors that is the poem's perspectival system.

Initially, the speaker's principal complaint against the ghosts seems to be that they will not add to the perfect coherence and harmony of the show he had at first thought they were joining. To prod them into blending into that spectacle of celebratory congruity, the speaker begins to lay out the coordinates of the inverted, baleful typology that expresses the Revolution's retroactive defeat. The key moment comes when the speaker tries to still the ghosts so that he can formally introduce them to their heirs:

For shame, old maniacs! Bring down those
tossed arms and let your white hair be,
Here gape your smart grand-sons—their wives
gaze at them from the windows. (1856, 272)

This formal introduction to the fathers' heirs partakes in the political antislavery shaming of the free states. A Republican campaign poem, one of

the relative few to focus on the Fugitive Slave Law, directly challenges each American with the question "Will you obey?" when Slavery plies her whip, lets loose her bloodhounds, "and bids you join her clan." If they will, that choice will prove that the fires "once kindled by your sires" have been effectively extinguished. The poem's first stanza anticipates this outcome in the founders' direct witnessing:

> Your fathers in their graves,
> Shall they behold you slaves,
> Ruled o'er by arrant knaves
> You've masters made?[45]

In "A Boston Ballad," the fathers must indeed endure this painful act of witnessing, but the apostates are immune to their inspection. That is because they, like a bloodless simulacrum of the speaker's initial stance as obtuse observer, are introduced in their own act of *gaping* and *gazing* that bars from their line of vision the ghosts' return. The speaker is thus stymied; his attempt to muster the ghosts into some kind of order through his formal introduction backfires in two ways: it highlights the new generation's inability to see the ghosts and relocates the occasion's ceremonial rigidity in the rendition's observers.

This perceptual narrowing within a closed observational circuit expresses, in fact, a temporal more than a spatial restriction. Actions conveyed in verbs suggesting an all-consuming, numbing, and exclusive observation—gaping and gazing—deny the citizenry the intimate communion with the past, upon which any true patriotism depends. They are incapable of the reciprocal interaction and realization with the fathers that would give the ghosts' pain and judgment a true salutary purpose. That in turn territorializes the space around them: it is "here" because they gape and gaze. The gaping itself is all that the broken-hearted fathers have left behind; they must "let [their] white hair be" in recognition that their time has passed. The speaker, disillusioned by his failure to restore the show's order, bitterly recognizes this shrinking and marks the failure of his formal introduction with the same word by which he had both offered that introduction and earlier defined his own initial celebratory positioning: "here."

The speaker's definitive dismissal of the ghosts—"I do not think you belong here, anyhow" (273)—is the first step in stabilizing his world and aligning it with an authentic origin myth to replace the defeated one. Relinquishing

the "show" he now realizes is at odds with the troops' march turns him from idle spectator to stern narrator. Insofar as he can, he takes the place of the judges he has banished and no longer addresses: "But there is one thing that belongs here—shall I tell you what it is, gentlemen of Boston?" (273). This self-chosen task comes across less as a prophecy or a demand than a clear-sighted description of the place he has now taken the responsibility to map, as if paying the price for his original perspectival passivity by seeing the world in all its appalling congruity. As he does so, his addressee slowly shifts from the specific city crowd to the ever-present Jonathan (figure for the wily New Englander and, more generally, American), and that shift itself completes the mapping of the world whose spatial coordinates he has finally grasped.

This last third of the poem gives the nation the type to which its own obedience can properly serve as antitype. If the people have disqualified themselves from becoming the fathers' heirs who will realize their fathers' unfinished victories, that does not mean the present moment ceases to define the narrative trajectory that it completes. It must, according to the logic of the poem, reconstitute the past by its choices one way or another. As in Republican typology, the people not only determine the defeat or victory of the fathers but attach the original meaning to the fathers' efforts, now fixed in the present moment rather than at the ostensible moment of their performance. The king's remains are a fit symbol because they represent the reclaimable object untouched by the people's progress, one way or another, since the Revolution. Though deriving in that sense from the present, it is the present as a culmination of an abnegated eighty years: the bones are what would have been left if the Revolution had been defeated, and yet there had been no development beyond that defeat. The corruption the king's misrule represented has already been perfected, and the people invite no further corruption but an achieved finality. In that way, the symbol takes the Revolution's defeat outside of time even while accomplishing it retroactively: it is a demonic inversion of a redemptive typology.[46]

The permanently unanimated bones reverse the poem's earlier defeated expectation while still answering to the unavoidable reciprocity between past and present: the bones need no spark of life for the task of reconstructing a dead authority. Such a galvanizing force, rather, is precisely what the ghosts needed and were denied by their blinded descendants. If they could have occupied the bodies of those descendants, the Revolution,

as the antislavery typological system demanded, would be refought. The same federal troops that had contaminated the ground upon which this reactivation should have occurred now travel to Europe to pillage the past for the symbol properly belonging to their action. The speaker sends them "there" so as to survey the place where he remains one last time as the site of a history-ended passivity.

The poem has already established that what they can see positions observers in a particular relationship, not just in a vantage point, to history. The speaker therefore accompanies his formal introduction of what "belongs here" with an order to the people to "look" and therefore make good on what their misdirected gaping has sealed as their historical identity. Significantly, the first line of the following passage had read "Here is a centerpiece for them" in the 1855 edition (90). What Whitman loses in omitting yet one more spatial deictic marker he gains by placing a greater stress on "for them"—the new procession where all parties responsible for the Fugitive Slave Law, including the "roarers from Congress," have converged (1856, 274). That expansion of the federal marshal to include the entire body politic is balanced by the further narrowing of focus in the people's commanded gaze toward the reconstructed King George:

> This centre-piece for them:
> Look! all orderly citizens—look from the win-
> dows, women! (1856, 274)

The speaker here calls for a perspectival organization well suited to the fixed arrangement of the dead King's skeletal parts as centerpiece—permanent in its lifelessness. The monument reconstructed from King George's remains combines the involuntary impotence of the ghosts with the voluntary stance responsible for that impotence: the orderly stillness of the citizens. The people are commanded to commemorate what their accession to the Fugitive Slave Law has made of the past.

Because the speaker's fantasy envisages a retroactive annulment of the past, which has already been achieved for all intents and purposes by the rendition itself, the ambiguity in the final lines merely reenacts this convergence between the real and the imaginary. It matters little whether the bargain presented to Jonathan involves the real event of the fugitive's rendition or the fantastical counterrevolutionary ceremony:

Stick your hands in your pockets Jonathan—you
    are a made man from this day,
You are mighty cute, and here is one of your
    bargains. (1856, 274)

On the one hand, the bargain is the Fugitive Slave Law, by which conservatives felt they were paying the price for national peace; on the other hand, there is also an implication that Jonathan has struck a hard bargain with Europe in acquiring their autocratic imperatives on the cheap. There may even be an echo of a widely reproduced humorous anecdote of the period that has Brother Jonathan gull a British custom officer into levying no duties on a riches-laden schooner he takes back to America ("here is freight for you" [273], as Whitman's speaker addresses the swift Yankee clipper earlier). Jonathan pulls off that trick by posing as an ignorant backwoods rube, who couldn't possibly possess anything valued by Europeans.[47] In Whitman's poem, Jonathan's passivity manages to sneak back to America—at even less expenditure of energy—what belongs in the old world. Jonathan need not exert himself for this boon: the friendly suggestion that he stick his hands in his pockets defangs the harsh order to the ghosts to "bring down those tossed arms" in their renunciation of the present. Together these two orders neutralize typological resurrection, what William Cullen Bryant in his patriotic poem "The Battle-Field" named as his generation's promise to the fathers: "Another hand thy sword shall wield."[48]

In these final lines, the speaker reconciles his initial and final perspectival missions. From the first line of the poem, with its command "Clear the way there, Jonathan!" (271), he had presumed to honor the procession by shuffling away whatever interferes with its integrity. He loses his good cheer while continuing that work, but the task doesn't fundamentally change when his formal banishment of the ghosts sparks the visionary experience that allows him to pinpoint what "belongs here." Completing that stage of his task swings him back, ironically, to the positive instructions of the poem's opening. Jonathan must lower his hands, not, like the ghosts, to mark his alienation from the scene but to register his apotheosis within it. In that achievement, the speaker finds his own triumph: he has at last discovered the nation's identity in its exemption from history. As the past vanishes to make way for a new establishment, the speaker's responsibility to facilitate

commemoration of the nation's founding dissolves in the collapse between historical deed and commemoration. The "here" that the speaker, in refining his own perspective, had struggled throughout the poem to assign accurately to the scene becomes one with the bargain itself, and a smug self-satisfaction gives the founding the kind of pageant it now deserves.

Distinct agents also fold into each other in this new national antimission. In a bitter recapitulation of his formal introduction of the ghosts to their oblivious heirs, the speaker formally introduces the bargain to the very one who has struck it and owns it. The earlier introduction had demanded further stage managing to purge the incongruity of the revolutionary presence; now the introduction itself seals the identity of its recipient, who becomes a "made man from this day." In Jonathan the speaker finds his task completed. Through that figure's withdrawal into self-interest, the speaker also situates himself temporally, as Jonathan's loafing ironically marks ceremonially the day of the rendition as the dawning of a new era. This formal proclamation, however, precludes development: "this day" becomes indistinguishable from Jonathan's resting spot. As Jonathan dissolves into this sickly fusion of "here" and "now," the speaker overcomes the tensions that blocked his perspectival purity by recognizing the nation's entry into an eternal present. The figure he had hustled aside in order to see the parade has become that parade—his responses calibrated to its endless reproduction, its orderly rigidity finally realized in stillness.

Within the political antislavery rhetorical universe, "A Boston Ballad" functions as a dramatization of the Republican taunt that the places the fathers consecrated to freedom have become a self-constructed prison that mocks the Revolution's success: "yet here ye stand / Bound by a heavier chain today." Whitman's poem formally maps the "here" so that it is indistinguishable from the standing. That convergence cloaks the incongruity from inspection; the present bars from its vantage point all of history and precludes all rebuke. Both the poem and that branch of the party's appeal devise a figurative spatial system to convey the historical paradox of a people ostensibly dedicated to honoring a revolution's achievement, while their land, their field of action, their historical role, their agency, their memory, and their will have been commandeered for that revolution's antithesis. It reconciles that problem with a national system of commemoration in a way that is perfectly satisfying, provided that the forces that "Liberty Poem" implies will live forever have, in fact, died.

Like the party discourse with which it is so closely affiliated, the 1856 *Leaves of Grass* lays out a way to undo Jonathan's bargain. That prescription resonated with the Republican call to resacralize the land as a token of the people's newly charged historical memory. A passage in a campaign poem making just such a call inverts the perspectival narrowing in "A Boston Ballad," the instrument of the citizenry's abdication; through a far-reaching alertness to the history encoded within their environment, the people recapture the energy that had founded their authentic selves no less than it had their home:

> Wake up, White Slaves! awake at length, and dare to look around,
> And cast your shoes from off your feet, you stand on Holy ground.
> For liberty first held her own in Massachusetts Bay,
> And the People dared to fight for Truth—They dare again to-day![49]

This short passage charts the progress from political slaves to new founders, accomplished merely by readjusting the people's orientation to their world. By seeing it for the first time, they unshackle themselves. The stanza's balanced final line dissolves the distinction between founders and current occupants, a victory won by obeying the speaker's command. That command to burst into a hyperconsciousness reverses the speaker's ironic instructions to Jonathan in Whitman's poem. Daring to look around becomes the precondition for daring to repeat the fathers' own boldness, which, by implication, itself depended on recognizing the historical charge emanating from their familiar places.

As the fruit of this victory, the antislavery taunt "yet here ye stand" can blend into its obverse in prophetic poetry, the promise to repeat what the founders had done: "We'll stand where once they stood."[50] A bitterly ironic geographic coincidence that flaunts a historical apostasy is redeemed when a common space expresses instead a historical recommitment. The land itself channels the political antislavery demand that a vague national loyalty, based on past victories, give way to reembodying through an authentic memory the historical force responsible for those victories. Thus, George W. Bungay, who six years later as a Republican campaign poet would describe the new generation possessed by the fathers' spirit as they march over a soil reconsecrated to the dead's memory ("above their hallowed graves we tread"),

in his long 1854 poem *Nebraska* resurrects the dormant "dead ashes" of the fathers in his command to the present generation: "Dust of our fathers, rise in deeds!"[51] Both poems reverse the inorganic and formalized relationship to the past that Whitman condemns in "A Boston Ballad," on the strength of a life-giving memory. The poem that follows "A Boston Ballad" in the 1856 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, a poem built entirely of commands, tasks the people with the same mission and by the same means: a form of memory that reincarnates and brings into the present its object.

"Poem of Remembrances" restores the bond between past and present by offering a remedy to the pathologies in national consciousness satirically unmasked in "A Boston Ballad." Whereas several poems in the 1856 edition affirm theoretically the intimate bond between past, present, and future, "Poem of Remembrances" works that position into its commands to the girl or boy of the title. Those sincere commands mirror the ironic commands of the previous poem's speaker to the fathers and to Jonathan. As he so often does when he places nostrums of American nationality in his poems, Whitman seems to support a conservative principle only to recontextualize it until it carries just the opposite charge. That is the case with the opening call to remember the organic compacts. Such an injunction had long been used to place the political antislavery movement outside the boundaries of acceptable discourse: attempts to limit the power of slavery were consistently recoded as an aggression, whose danger went beyond the slavery issue itself to threaten the very founding principles of national cohesion. As we have seen, however, that construction itself relied on a view of the present as the position from which the nation's contractual arrangements could be fulfilled and the Union thereby protected. "Poem of Remembrances" is devoted to undercutting that view. It implicitly critiques the conservative system of proscriptions, joining the antislavery charge that, in their very fealty to the past, compromising Northerners were sapping both the past and present of the adhesive power that binds them to each other and to the future.

The nouns that serve as objects for "remember" in the opening lines forbid the addressed youngsters to bring to consciousness any part of the past that can be segregated in that realm and thus fetishized as a relic; all of them point to what the founders projected into the future:

REMEMBER the organic compact of These
States!
Remember the pledge of the Old Thirteen thence-
forward to the rights, life, liberty, equality, of
man!
Remember what was promulged by the founders,
ratified by The States, signed in black and
white by the Commissioners, read by Wash-
ington at the head of the army!
Remember the purposes of the founders!—Re-
member Washington! (1856, 275)

The rapidity of the speaker's orders matches the requirement that the fathers' accomplishments be valued for what they have sent into the present. At another level, the declaration's speedy dissemination anticipates its forward momentum toward becoming an active American agent: it is promulgated, ratified, signed, and finally read aloud, at which point it dislodges from a single moment and parallels the speaker's own timeless voice and what he calls in the 1860 edition its "audience interminable" (1860, 6).

The poem further weakens the nexus between genuine acts of memory, as properly conceived, and mere notations of the past when it calls for "remembering" events that can only be even registered in consciousness because they are ongoing: the "copious masses" streaming into the nation and the "hospitality" belonging to a nation that makes those arrivals possible. By the time the poem reaches the declaration "Remember, government is to subserve individuals!" (1856, 275), the refrain has taken on the secondary meaning of "bear in mind a principle": this shift, however, represents not a casual loosening of the poem's terms but a tightening of what it binds together. The principle survives its establishment through revolution, and to enact it means to remember it. Thus, that passage, which is followed by a brief political statement, smooths the shift from "remember" to "anticipate" and, indeed, obscures the difference between them.

The speaker enjoins the children to anticipate the same national blossoming Whitman forecasts in "Broad-Axe Poem," but in "Poem of Remembrances" the force of labor yields its sovereign role to the very mental operation itself:

Anticipate when the thirty or fifty millions are to
become the hundred, or two hundred, or five
hundred millions, of equal freemen and free-
women, amicably joined. (1856, 276)

The victory in this projection cannot rely on a lazy faith in its inevitability—that seems to be the implication of following this passage immediately with a new prescription. That next stanza in some respects relates to the more positive affirmations of "Unnamed Lands" in the 1860 edition, where the struggles and suffering of the past are affirmed as belonging to "the scheme of the world" (1860, 413); but the emphasis here lies elsewhere in several respects: the noncelebratory neutrality of the description, its place within "Poem of Remembrances," and its place within this part of the 1856 *Leaves of Grass*:

Recall ages—One age is but a part—ages are
but a part,
Recall the angers, bickerings, delusions, superstitions of the idea of caste,
Recall the bloody cruelties and crimes. (1856, 276)

The command to recall is very different here from the command to remember in the opening stanzas. Whereas earlier the revolutionary achievement was projected into the present, here the past must retain its own integrity for it to contribute to republican citizenship. The poem's two consecutive instructions work in harmony: the only way to keep the revolutionary heritage alive is to perceive it as a stage in a historical sequence, whose "bloody" early steps survive in the danger of their resurgence. The people must feel what the revolution overcame and conquered in order to honor it. Such a consciousness forestalls the corrupt collapse of past into future that characterizes in different ways the political universe in *The Eighteenth Presidency!* and the dystopian world of "A Boston Ballad." That poem traces back to a failure of historical memory the disjunction—and eventual ironic harmony—between reenacting the nation's origins and ceremoniously honoring those origins. The two stanzas placed one after the other in "Poem of Remembrances" overcome that problem by setting aside momentarily the revolutionary past to restore it to the longer trajectory that alone can give it meaning. This strategy follows

the Republican project to shake the people away from the presentism that has engulfed them.

To break the stranglehold of compromise's logic, Republicans diagnosed the people's decisions according to the strength of their directional pull toward the past and the future. In a typical formula, national redemption "is possible if successive generations will consider the past and the future, and not ever be blinded by the temporary issues of the present." In this appeal, taking up the particular responsibility to make "freedom national" assumes that "future generations will have" their own task to perform.[52] The parties to this compact cross generations and thus contractually proscribe obedience to the political class reigning at the moment, which has no duties or rights in the compact's execution. Thus, the prominent Republican Nathaniel Banks meant it in two senses when he claimed that the people, like the revolutionary fathers themselves, "were not fighting a battle for today only, but for the future."[53] The future is both the object of their efforts and partner to them.

The confederacy of generations is how party antislavery rhetoric brought the historical charge it assigned the people into line with its typological reading of the Revolution. The perceptual readjustments demanded included viewing the present as equivalent to the Revolution not just in what it performs and accomplishes—the overthrowing of an oligarchy—but in how it is then viewed by later generations and how it must remain conscious in the present of that future act of retrospection. According to this construction, the bond between the revolutionary generation and the present can be fulfilled only in the debt the present generation feels to the future. Of all the meeting points between party antislavery rhetoric and *Leaves of Grass*, that one is the most recurrent and prominent throughout the three antebellum editions; but nowhere does it take on the practical ramifications it assumes when it appears in "Poem of Remembrances." It is the only time that the principle appears as an admonition, which implicitly brings the danger of the preceding poem, "A Boston Ballad," back into view:

> Think of the past!
> I warn you that in a little while others will find
> their past in you and your times. (1856, 277)

In "A Boston Ballad," Jonathan had overcome this hurdle by consecrating the present to a mummified past that halts the passage of time. The stanza

in "Poem of Remembrances" inverts that solution by hinging the act of remembering on anticipating the next link in human memory's endless chain. Whitman had brought out the political antislavery implications of this motif in his satirical "Song for Certain Congressmen" in 1850 (later entitled "Dough-Face Song"), where the compromisers brush away any such considerations in favor of serving the present:

> And what if children, growing up,
> In future seasons read
> The thing we do? and heart and tongue
> Accurse us for the deed?
> The future cannot touch us;
> The present gain we heed.[54]

For Whitman's satirical doughfaces, the immunity from the generational chain of responsibility makes them reverse roles with the future children, whose deprivation they ignore; they became adult children, full of the childish heedlessness for long-term consequences, with none of the compensating innocent moral energy. More than a corrupting self-interest enters into this blinkered perspective: the venality simply expresses a more fundamental renunciation of true presence in history. According to this construction, the only way to act, rather than comply, was to melt the seal holding the present moment in a suffocating segregation from the achievements of earlier and subsequent generations.

During the 1856 campaign, Whitman's 1850 satirical medium for his prophetic point tended to be cast aside in favor of a tone more in keeping with the stern warning in "Poem of Remembrances." Republican campaign poetry reverberated with Whitman's motif—part of its project to steer the free states' decisions away from the prudential and toward the historical:

> Has your heart never thrilled, when story and song
> Has told of the triumph of right over wrong!
> Oh! then let your actions to-day give a theme
> In letters of light, o'er the future to gleam.[55]

In this passage, the memory sanctions and activates the prospective performance, as it so often does in patriotic orations. Conversely, Republicans often suggested that the right to the memory depended on the repetition. In 1857

Henry Wilson warned that the deeds of the Revolution were under threat of being "blurred and blotted" by the triumphs of slavery and that the only way to restore them to clear view was to write new "bright and glowing" pages in the providential history of which the present is but a stage. His injunction echoes Whitman's in "Poem of Remembrances": "Let them realize that the eye of God is upon them—that future generations will scrutinize their motives and pronounce judgment upon their acts, when the passions, prejudices, and interests of this age are hushed forever."[56] In Wilson's formulation we see the most significant implication in the Republican project to refashion the trope that binds memorialization with dedication: that a repetition of the past that begins as an antitype will itself become a type over time if fostered by subsequent loyal generations. Doing the work in the present to permit that continuity alone constitutes a genuine act of remembering.

Both Whitman and his party, then, prescribed a republican mode of temporality whose very premises demanded a certain program of action. Like his party, Whitman entered into a rhetorical universe that had long made the requirement to honor the fathers the final criterion for judging political decisions. By striking a version of that model that ruled out acceding to slavery's demands, Whitman cooperated with a parallel revisionary project whose success was vital to the political antislavery movement's insinuation into the party system. For both Whitman and the party, that rhetorical accomplishment contributed to a broader mission to alter the requirements of a historicized citizenship so as to turn what had once seemed treasonous—and what continued to be represented as treasonous by opposing Northern parties—into the sole patriotic duty. Whitman sustains that project with his representations in the 1856 *Leaves of Grass*: memory and performance thrive in a reproductive system where the undernourishment of one would starve the other. The Revolution will have happened only when treated as a herald of what the people must immediately do.

Yet in its insistence on cross-generational commitment, the trope did little to lay out a model for overcoming what Whitman bewails in his party tract—the blocks preventing the individual power of living Americans from cohering into political authority. Another party trope, though distinct from the one examined in this chapter, encompassed the call for a reactivation of revolutionary energy while it also conjured an imaginary world whose denizens could achieve most of the political antislavery movement's key

self-chosen tasks: shaping the people into a true collectivity, overthrowing an entrenched political class, and reconquering the nation's path of development. Whitman follows his usual pattern in how he taps this pervasive figure for the nation's redemption: he employs it directly and with little modification in *The Eighteenth Presidency!* while in his poetry he both poaches it for its specific narrative steps and plumbs it for its latent implications. Within one particular major poem, the trope, stripped to its essentials, emits its energy free of the specific polemical context restricting its reach in Whitman's tract. As in other cases, Whitman's poem enlivens and universalizes a rhetorical resource from the party system that the political antislavery movement needed to see bound more closely to their own particular principles—even while employing it themselves with all its party conventions attached. Whitman's decontextualizing appropriation found its perfect object in this particular trope, one already prone to such decontextualizing even in its party use. While bracketing the practical details, it offered a fantastical account of how the people themselves will undo their own abdication from their sovereign duties. It also began to sketch the contours of the next stage in the party's and Whitman's utopian vision (to be considered in chapter 5), where the polity's divisions along lines of class and region dissolve into a common bond of affective nationality woven out of action itself.

CHAPTER FOUR

"Poem of the Road" and the Party Trope of Thronging

In October of 1856, a Michigan Republican newspaper celebrated the growth and projected success of its party in terms that only the youngest of its readership could have failed to recognize as highly conventional. The passage depicts the convergence of citizens in support of the new party as if it were an invasion and occupation powerful enough to convulse the very earth:

> They are rallying from the field, the forge, the furnace, and the workshop. They sweep the bosom of the great lakes, and they throng the streets of the lake cities. . . . They are coming! Already is their cry upon the air; already their steady march, keeping step to the music of freedom, shakes the ground.[1]

By 1856, this metaphor for the burgeoning political commitment and solidarity that a political party was meant at once to rely upon and usher in had become so routine that any one occurrence must have carried at best a weakened charge. Yet this same metaphor helped to shape a poem that appeared a mere month earlier in the 1856 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, namely "Poem of the Road." How is it that a poem as new and startling as Whitman's could participate in what had become a cliché of party discourse and, indeed, could owe much of its power to that participation? The answer lies at the heart of the contribution of *Leaves of Grass* to the party project: Whitman's poetry cycle draws out the radical possibilities of a convention-ridden discourse that Whitman's party itself was attempting to shape for new purposes. Whitman could undertake that project using bolder strokes and wider reapplications than could his party. While Republicans were devoted largely to adapting

rhetorically the long-standing political antislavery message to the requirements of partisan competition, Whitman approached the discursive tensions built into that process at a root level: he reinvigorates the major tropes of party discourse, which had lost half their potency by the time they were redirected to antislavery. In the case of thronging, his poem recovers from the mists of overuse the buried meaning of the trope as it had once shone clear—before it became a hackneyed party rhetorical tool.

Whitman's project of revivification found its fit vehicle in the trope's promises. Whether in Whitman's poetry or in party discourse, the thronging trope forecasts—by simultaneously promoting and taking for granted—a fantastical narrative trajectory for reconstituting a nation. It concentrates into an event the process of resurrecting a lost force that had once animated the citizenry but had grown weak through disuse. That reclamation would stir up from the land's foundations, in several senses of the word, what years of habit and deference had left merely dormant, while more alert agents devoted themselves diligently to a nearly irreversible usurpation. The persistence of the developing trope over three decades illustrates how party antislavery needed to enter into preexisting discursive systems mid-century: these parties struggled, not to overthrow and replace what Louis Montrose calls the "repertoire of representational forms and figures" but to open up those shared rhetorical resources to new implications that would set unnegotiable antislavery conditions for national redemption.

Whitman's poem is the final point in a two-stage process of rhetorical appropriation and redirection: in the first stage, the Jacksonian trope of thronging was appropriated for party antislavery purposes; in the second stage, Whitman took this modification of the trope to its Emersonian conclusion. Not only does the trope allow Whitman to represent the people as accessing a primal authority lying latent within the nation's physical spaces and multifarious energies, Whitman also uses it to turn into a universal principle what the antislavery appropriation of the trope forecast: that the people will take the reins of history into their own hands by reconstituting their unity as an occupation and by abjuring the final settlements that have pinioned them. Yet even that specific promise lay implicit in thronging's early party iterations; it is to the original emergence of the trope, then, that we will first turn.

Though it had its origins in sources as diverse as nineteenth-century European antimonarchical rhetoric, retrospective paeans to the Revolution, popular songs, temperance appeals, and evangelical hymns and poetry, the thronging trope as a figure of political discourse came into dominance in the era of the second party system, that is, in the 1830s and 1840s. It suited well a development in that era that many historians have examined in detail and is the obverse of the continued antipartyism examined in this study's first chapter: the rhetorical legitimization of political parties. If parties could be seen not as factions but as the proper manifestations of deeper passions and principles among the people, they would lose their association with internal division and with decline into corruption. It is no accident that *The Eighteenth Presidency!* uses the trope to smooth over the contradiction between its condemnation of party and its support for a new one, for the tract rests on the same assumption that if party keeps its original impetus, it remains exempt from its association with self-interest and class hegemony.

As it grew into maturity, the trope became increasingly distant from the actual mechanisms of political organization. In its inchoate stage, in the 1828 campaign, it often was used to burnish the movement to the polls with a military sheen, in keeping with the heroic reputation of Andrew Jackson.[2] Even while the trope took on a more independent status, it continued to be linked to the actual events of rallying and gathering, of meeting and resolving. Indeed, it was within those contextual limits that its prophetic narrative was first fledged through use and amplification.[3] Yet more and more, as the example that opens this chapter illustrates, the trope lost its link to these material practices. Instead, it began to figure forth more abstract historical processes, whose foundation was a reawakened populace.

Despite all its permutations, most occurrences of the trope begin with the premise that the people have held back from political commitment, either blindly indifferent to or warily remote from the rigid patterns of governance that had emerged partly through their own inaction. Indeed, implicit in the trope is the antiestablishment tenor of *The Eighteenth Presidency!*, which assigns the ultimate responsibility for the nation's political apostasy to the people's passive compliance. Even the trope's function of redeeming party grows out of the residual antipartyism of the second- and third-party systems:

one of the purposes of the people's thronging would be to override the party machinery that has bred untrue delegates of the people. At the same time, the thronging referred, ultimately, to rallying around a party—and not always a new party. The tension between these two functions of the trope points to its ultimate cultural role.

The idealization of spontaneity in the culture's representation of political action helped to reconcile the novel embrace of party with the remnants of suspicion toward the actual operation of parties. Witnessing particular expressions of suspect political pageantry, Whitman himself was predisposed to be attracted to this two-sided cultural ideal. In an interpretation of how Whitman's poetry relates to his contempt for the manipulations of the New York mayor, Fernando Wood, who stage-managed patriotic expressions for his own ends, M. Wynn Thomas shows how Whitman's condemnation of inauthentic political representation was bound up both with his call for more organic public displays and with his deepest ideal, evident in his poetry, of "spontaneous communality generated by harmonious individualism."[4] A similar ideal informed the party vision. Enfolding partisan allegiance within a broader organic emergence, the thronging trope blotted from the picture even a stage as minimally suspect as organization, let alone the more disreputable mechanisms of party discipline, coercion, or favor-trading. Cleansed of its work-a-day corruptions, party, through the lens of the trope, held out the promise of a people who have been restored to the original revolutionary function, which has remained dormant within them and must be activated for new modes of solidarity and agency to redeem the nation.

Indeed, the political scientist who has analyzed in greatest depth not the thronging trope but one of its forebears, whose traces could still be felt in thronging passages[5]—the martial analogy—argues that that analogy helps to reconcile one of the political culture's most conspicuous paradoxes: the flourishing of antiparty rhetoric within the seemingly contradictory context of partisan celebration. Cedric de Leon posits that his examination of martial rhetoric answers the following question: "how could mass party competition originate in the interplay of partisanship on the one hand and antipartyism on the other?"[6] He answers that question by reference to the Jacksonian view of party as the defense against an aristocratic minority, an organization born of necessity that, even if launched by a relative few, represented in its spirit the mass of the people: "the solidaristic and oppositional strains of martial

discourse meshed with the contrast between the indivisible democracy and the minoritarian aristocracy." This martial discourse was "a language of mass mobilization" that "hail[ed] national elites . . . and rank-and-file voters to action."[7] One of the "inherited discursive practices" martial discourse grew out of was "the defensive prerogative of revolutionary republicanism." As we shall see, "the sense of kinship with the original revolutionary patriots," which de Leon finds in the martial images, informed the thronging trope as well.[8]

Like the martial trope, the thronging trope evoked a party's original grounds for rescuing the republic and hence projected the ideal impulse of initial party formation over all the stages of party organization, appeal, growth, and accomplishment. By treating that single moment of inspiration as if it bore its momentum through all later developments, the thronging trope cast a messy sociopolitical process in utopian terms, which will become highly relevant to "Poem of the Road": a permanent transfiguration of the people achieved by an awakening that instantly bursts into nonhabitual actions and binds citizens together through new affinities that allow them to fulfill their true national purpose.

The thronging trope can be broken down into five sequential narrative functions, not all of which are directly represented in every poem or prose passage: coming forth or issuing; thronging; rallying; marching; and occupying. I have defined the second of those five actions, the thronging, as key to the trope because it is at that stage that the land itself becomes infused with the new energy that the spontaneous gathering has released, clearing a previously uncharted space in the political landscape. The source of that energy is the first stage, the issuing or coming forth. This is the stage that is most important both to Whitman's poem and to the original trope's emphasis on the deployment of republican power. It therefore requires detailed examination.

The issuing forth that begins the thronging trope presupposes a prior narrative of the nation's decline. According to this construction, the people had been too caught up in the pursuit of their individual interests to prevent concentrations of power and property from subverting true republican government. As a Democratic speaker put it in 1840, "if there is no imperious call, they [the people] chose to be in their occupations," while the office holders,

with no distinction between their private work and their public function, are always only too willing to form into "mighty hosts."[9] To stop this drift into despotism, the people must do more than simply emerge from their private spaces: they must transport the energy they spend for productive purposes in their own lives out into the public sphere, pool it with their comrades' energy, and employ it to carve out a new path into the future. This utopian element of the trope thus owes something to the ideal analyzed in chapter 2. The people will channel their acts of work into civic purposes so seamlessly and so spontaneously that the different efforts blend into one in a single magnificent spectacle. At the same time, the trope counterbalanced this view—that labor power was simply finding a new outlet—with the ideal of abandonment and self-sacrifice. The following Whig plea puts that ideal in a form so standard that Whitman echoes it directly in "Poem of the Road": "Come from the hill tops and the valleys. Shut up the doors of the cabin, pull the latch swing in, and leave them tenantless for one day."[10] To be sure, this particular example speaks to the practical logistics of rallying, but it also encapsulates the tension between self-realization and renunciation that lies at the heart of the trope and will give Whitman the chance to redirect it toward a new version of collective action. This tension in turn reflects a republican ambivalence toward individual pursuits, which can be taken as at once the soul of the nation and a distracting, and ultimately self-sabotaging, failure of enlightened self-interest.

Indeed, at times the trope seemed to invert the traditional definition of work as a regular discipline, implying that a true self-reliance demands a release from daily duties. The people's neglect of their republican obligations amounts to a lollygagging dependence on what the revolutionary generation has already achieved. Because this construct becomes central to the pivotal renunciation of "laid-up stores" in "Poem of the Road" (1856, 231), it is worth further consideration. An 1840 Whig example shows the people coming back to life by issuing "from the workshop and the field." They prove their willingness to reserve their energy for the task of preserving what they had come to take for granted: they "manifest the devotion to the principles of the revolution that still inspired their bosoms, and their determination to rescue their beloved country from a thralldom more unjust and more oppressive than that which had once led their fathers to shed on that very spot [Bunker Hill] their blood." Sacrificing their daily routine, then, amounts to a revival of their true life: "They have aroused themselves from the lethargy in which

they have fallen—and come forth like a giant refreshed by sleep!"[11] This infusion of revolutionary energy produces real effort, and only through it do the masses become a people depending on their own faculties. Thus, an 1838 Democratic appeal hints at the sacrifice of selfish accumulation: "the Farmer will leave his fields and his flocks, and the Mechanic his shop and his tools, to pay the debt they owe to their country and her institutions."[12] When properly apprehended, the workplace has been mortgaged to republican institutions, and the only way to claim title to it is to leave it in order to vindicate those institutions.

In coming out of their several places, the people are not abandoning their work but are redoubling its force by pooling it. To emphasize this redirecting of a power that has been confined to individuals and to segregated spheres, the trope categorizes the throngers according to profession and residence. Typically, they come from the workshop, the farm, the fields, the hills, and together they infuse the very path they tread with a new kind of energy that shakes the nation and dislodges the consolidated power of republicanism's enemies. The ground shakes; the earth moves; the mountains undulate; the air carries a tempest—not because of the movement alone but because that movement signals an integration of the functions of a freeman. The energy is not lost but is redirected toward the land itself so that what had been developing the nation economically can also be brought to bear in redeeming its institutions from the threats hanging over that development.

The voice of the fathers often initiates this consolidation, cutting through the very distancing medium of space and time that secludes the citizen in the individual's "homestead." One Democratic campaign poem of 1840 is particularly explicit in laying out this narrative of a political Annunciation:

> They watched from the door
> Of their homesteads afar,
> The faint, fading glimmer of Liberty's star.
> But the voice of the fathers came down to their ear . . .
> Arouse ye! Arouse ye! . . .
> For thy soil is degraded—
> Dishonored thy might![13]

In this campaign poem, the fathers' call ushers the people out of their distant retreats and shames them into laying aside their dangerous confidence that

the nation's political future could be left safely in the hands of others. Their previous neglect, in the process, is turned to good account. The people's distant vantage point, their very alienation from the avenues of power, propels them to a more fundamental assumption of authority over the nation's destiny than an immersion in the petty competitions of the office-holding class would allow. The site of a distant decay becomes that mission's end point. The fathers' voice, then, redeems distance by closing a temporal gap that, if left open, would map the nation on permanent lines of alienation. "The grey past is calling out,"[14] as one typical Democratic 1840 poem put it; and the vast spaces separating its auditors from one another will, in response, collapse in convergence.

The polarity between passive watching and active hearing found in these poems is common in the trope. Voice and song become the connecting line between citizens who, through their own perceptions, can notice only vaguely the path to decline. The warning sound multiplies and moves freely throughout the landscape, suggesting that the number of Americans awakened will grow exponentially, as in the following Free Soil example from 1848: "the blast of Freedom's trumpet is blown; the shrill sound echoes from mountain to mountain; sweeps through the valleys, and booms along the plains."[15] In this passage, as is typical in the trope, the dissemination of the warning blends into an announcement of a final conquest—a final end to the usurpers' reign. The sound begins as an awakening herald. It crystallizes into voice specifically at that point when the people have grasped the new avenue of their power, and the circle that began with the fathers' warning and then merged into the land's reverberation is completed in the people's rallying song. Thus, in an 1848 Democratic thronging poem, the "echoing notes" from each feature of the landscape eventually produce the "battle cry, loud, wild and free" through which the people proclaim their arrival.[16]

This fusion allays the fear that the oligarchs have done more than simply capture the instruments of political power; they have leeched from the very soil of the nation the historical power encoded within it. Both that danger and its remedy turned on the construct of "the land"—a construct that enters into Whitman's figure of the road. "The land" conflates the medium of political rescue with the object of rescue; it was simultaneously the people's true patrimony, the path laid out for political redemption, and the medium of communication among a diverse people. In all these functions, the land

is threatened with degradation. Thus, in 1832 an opposition newspaper beseeched the people to recognize in the Jackson administration the "unholy feet" set to "trample on all that distinguishes this favored clime from every other nation."[17] The degradation of the soil threatens to return the nation to the entropic topography of Europe and thereby put an end to the promise of the Revolution. In a conceit that Whitman will both reverse and deploy, the steps toward concerted action will themselves redeem the ground upon which those steps are taken by activating the people's latent power and thus reactivating the nation's historical track.

The "soil" then becomes both what is redeemed and the avenue for new forms of solidarity and affinity between different segments of the citizenry. When the people arise, they carve out, as in Isaiah 49, a new topography, structured only by the natural forces susceptible to the people's activation. Thus, in some cases, it is left ambiguous whether the nation's natural landmarks speak before or only after they have been shaken into song, whether Freedom inheres in them and is simply waiting for expression or they are themselves made over by the activity. An 1840 Democratic poem begins with these lines, where Freedom's breath has two organic sources:

> Awake to the sound: 'tis the soul-thrilling cry
> That Freedom breathes forth from her high mountain dwelling:
> It sweeps the green earth—it ascends the calm sky,
> On the mild, chainless breezings triumphantly swelling![18]

The premise here is one picked up in "Poem of the Road": that nature has ordered a blazoning of freedom through the universe, which the people must hear as a command voiced both from the past and from the natural world's own mechanisms. In many instances of the trope, the features of the landscape are inseparable from the united force of the gatherers—now something more primal than human, now something so organic to the land around them that the venue becomes one with the movement.

Like a tempest, the gatherers remake as they sweep the terrain. This is less an identification or a metonymical replacement, however, than an almost supernatural blending of latent functions within what had formerly been two distinct degraded sources. Once no longer demarcated and parceled off, the land carries within its very organic processes the mechanisms of national reconfiguration that the journeyers will eventually enact. Both move not so

much with intention as out of an inveterate impulse. This construction is well suited to Whitman's Emersonian faith that human development obeyed the laws of Nature's always progressive impulses. Whitman's reliance on this motif owes much, as does Whitman's poem, to the radical British Romantics' related confidence that the land has the success and permanence of revolution encoded within it, awaiting human realization.[19] Even in the complex relationship between the Earth's voice and the Titan's in *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley seems to promise that the land's allegiance to revolution will outlast and supersede disheartening defeats.

In both the thronging trope and Whitman's poem, the blending of the two irresistible forces portends their final victory. When in "Poem of the Road" the speaker promises to his potential recruits that "the earth never tires" (1856, 231), he reassures them that though it is "rude and incomprehensible at first," its silence should not alienate those who are willing to join from devoting their own "blood" and "thews" to it (232). He had set the stage for this encouraging directive earlier when he humanized the "passive surfaces" of the city scene by claiming that those surfaces have been "peopled" from "the living and the dead" (235). As a result, he is sensitized to discern that colonizing process in reverse once on the open road, which he early on experiences as "latent with curious existences" (225). This anticipates the moment when his recruits "merge all in the travel they tend to" (235) and recognize "the universe itself as a road" (236). By that point the road measures, more than anything else, time as the medium through which the journeyers could "go thither" (235) ceaselessly, with their entire being and with the universe in cooperation. The transformation of the route into the route-takers is fundamental to the narrative realization of both the party trope and Whitman's poem.

The path's susceptibility to that change only confirms that the space is utopian—the only space where, in a figure important to Whitman's appropriation, the people can free themselves from their own internalized bonds. Those bonds, derived from their established roles within the social order, had tempted them to shirk and forget their republican duties. Though it is also particular to party antislavery's emphasis on a hierarchy-breaking national solidarity, the following Free Soil instance lays out a process that inheres also within the original Jacksonian trope: "As the breeze f'm the mountain sweeps over the river, / So, chainless and free, shall our thoughts be, for

ever."[20] Once free, the thoughts cohere into a new agent. Thus, in one 1848 song the twice repeated refrain "We are all free soilers" is sounded through the land, and the more clearly it is heard, the more people join the march: "Freemen, up! Let's join the chorus / Let us swell the increasing throng."[21] As it grows, the range of the declaration's reception begins to correspond to the borders of a new nationality.

Indeed, the thronging trope had the political culture's prophetic invitation encoded within it: that the mechanisms of a party's own short-term efforts sketched out the ideal society or nation that its long-term success would bring to fruition. Democrats and Whigs gave different complexions to the accounts of class convergence. In Democratic poems, as individual citizens come from their workshops and farms, the power of individual labor clears out the decadent impulses and ambitions of oligarchic control. Whigs did not entirely shy away from that redemption narrative, but they also implied that the demagoguery that bred class hatreds would end, as the act of thronging reflected, through a momentary spectacle, the harmony of interests in whose perfect realization the people's true hopes lay.[22] Despite their different charges, both parties employed the trope so as to imply an inclusiveness that Whitman would then take further: reducing the social distinctions to a mere obstacle to be brushed aside in a broader project of rejuvenation. Such a shunning of distinctions applied also at the level of the nation's sectional demarcations.

All parties employed the thronging trope to adumbrate an idealized and reconstituted national Union in a way relevant both to the later antislavery appropriation and to Whitman's modification. Irrespective of the party employing it, under the terms of the trope the difference between sections disappears, as the people come out of their several states to congregate in a space that is of no particular region but exists only in the imaginary world of common purpose—in a land where the very topographical variety has been reshaped into the bellows of a musical instrument, echoing and resounding the people's apotheosis into a pure nationality.[23] The recognition at last of a common emergency breaks down sectional distinctions and reconfigures the land, as shared determination comes to trump any more local interest.[24]

The nation's deepest intentions, over space or time, converge in the new landscape. When the people "join the mighty chorus," they also "swell the notes [the fathers] sounded."[25] The terrain is unified and redeemed, as the

music it releases bundles together the nation's various redemptive moments to be concentrated and realized at last in the present. When the people venture out to accomplish this, they redeem history as well as the land.

If this recovery of a common national space was seen to revive the soil's procreative power, there was good reason for the political antislavery movement to make the most out of this long established metaphorical association. As slavery's extension into previously free territory increasingly became the key source of national disputes, the trope of contamination, which had been silent on slavery, could take on this new wealth of implications while retaining the original tenor of republicanism's decay as a biogeological curse. And the language of redemption, long used to celebrate the people's disentanglement from the baleful rule of the opposing party, could be deployed to forecast the twin acts of rebellion that will wrest the territories from slavery's control.

By 1856, the thronging trope had been used in national campaigns for almost thirty years, and no party abandoned it as a rhetorical device simply because unforeseen events had suddenly created an unprecedented party system organized around the slavery extension issue. How pro forma the Democratic rendering of the trope tended to be, however, is illustrated by the party's lifting a song from the 1848 campaign and simply renaming it. To be sure, such borrowing was far from an uncommon practice, and Republicans themselves poached heavily from their 1848 Free Soil forebears in many of their productions. Still, given that the Democrats claimed to represent in 1856 the national force that would rescue the nation from selfish faction and wrongheaded sectionalism, one might have expected the trope to be easily adapted to and enriched by their new narrow focus on Union-saving. Instead, the borrowed poem rehearses all the standard features of the trope—the temporary abandonment of individual pursuits, the coming together of different professions "to act in this struggle their part," the converging from a variety of geographical and residential spaces—and simply tags a Union-saving bromide at the end to fit the new context.[26] Most Democratic poems made just the opposite use of the party tradition, dwelling obsessively on protecting the Union from the Republican fanatics, while employing the machinery of thronging at best perfunctorily, as, in effect, an inescapable rhetorical decoration.

The task of reworking the trope for the slavery controversy clearly fell to Republicans. It helped that the nation's geography now bore directly on the new party's warning of a national threat; and the trope's imaginary topography hence became all the more central when it began to encompass not just a vaguely defined national domain but clearly demarcated spaces threatened by slave-driving conquest. The trope already had the people leaving their secluded places to restore the dishonored and desecrated land: in a literalization of that conceit, now Kansas itself could serve as a specific redeemable territory. The soil, which in the Jacksonian poems needed to be preserved from desecration, in Republican poems also held the nation's productive and reproductive energy, facing extinction under slavery's assaults. Thus, a thronging poem used in both the 1856 and 1860 campaign asks, "Shall the dark tide of Slavery roll o'er the sod / That Freedom makes bloom like the garden of God ?"[27] The swelling of the people's response, the "mighty torrent," would be like rain to a barren land, rescuing it from "degradation."[28] Yet this projected response to the threat also became more concrete in the wake of the Kansas crisis.

Outside the context of party campaigns, antislavery writers employed the trope to celebrate the streaming of free-state emigrants into the territory to protect the land from the Slave Power's schemes.[29] Lucy Larcom's "Call to Kansas" bridges the gap between that subgenre and an implicit appeal for party action on the home front ("YEOMEN strong, hither throng!").[30] Indeed, in the campaign poetry itself, free-state voters join the prior heroic settlers, both groups swooping down, one literally, one figuratively, to restore Kansas to its natural state of freedom. In many campaign poems, the two groups fuse into a quasi-military alliance: for example, in Charles Weyman's prize-winning "Fremont and Victory," one of the most frequently published campaign poems of 1856, the trope's obligatory converging citizens from diverse spaces become "the great army in motion," which seems to rescue Kansas without the bothersome intermediate step of voting.[31] The original Jacksonian trope required surprisingly few additions to blend together the two redemptive movements: in Lydia Maria Child's "Free Soil Song" or William Henry Burleigh's "Up for the Conflict," for instance, the standard trope is barely modified, even though it now implies not only party rallying but a quasi-military liberation of a territory that is both the offspring and the parent of a broader national recuperation.[32]

The people's issuing forth in Republican versions of the thronging trope is in part what it was in early party iterations—a destabilizing of fixed patterns of power in Washington and throughout the republic—but is also something new: a countermove to the historical advances of slavery. Thus, one Republican poem, after the usual injunctions to gather and march, lays out what is at stake in that new formation:

> Shall the power that has burdened our country's great name,
> In the sight of all nations, with curses and shame,
> Still ride on in triumph from mountain and sea
> Blotting out in its red path the homes of the free?[33]

Here the localized threat to the free-state settlers is traced back to the blocking power of slavery as a national force, imperiling the nation's movement forward by obeying its one imperative, to conquer or die. Thronging will unblock that route. In the long prophetic campaign poem *Signal Fires*, millions throng "across the Prairie's burning marge" to send the scourge of slavery back "whence it came," as if the mere common purpose expressed in the "loud cheer" that permeates "the wide air" deprives slavery of the mode of egress it had used to threaten Kansas.[34]

In such tropes, the battle between true citizen and corrupt office holder becomes a kind of proxy war for the more bleakly physical territorial struggle between despotic and free-labor systems. Thus, in one Republican trope, tilting toward the martial side of the spectrum and echoing *The Eighteenth Presidency!*, the old conceit that the Revolution involved citizen soldiers leaving their work to overthrow tyranny is repurposed for the new narrative of the free-state pander, helpless against committed amateur resistance: "They will fight, each armed with the weapons of his trade; scythes, forks, old continental muskets, or whatever other weapons their houses, shops and fields may furnish. . . . [T]he undisciplined people shall in this contest trample down, by main strength, the slaveholders and their dependents, the overseers, office holders and office-seekers."[35] A single move from the people would shatter the wider institutional machinery growing parasitically out of concentrated oligarchic self-interest.

Such a move responds to the necessity examined in the previous chapter: that the people can truly commemorate the Revolution only by repeating it. This proposition will become key to the resolution reached after several

preliminary steps in "Poem of the Road," but in the thronging poems it operates more as an analogical premise. From its early appearances in the days of Jackson, the trope's core metaphor was taken from the myth of a spontaneously organized Revolutionary army. Each citizen soldier would interrupt his daily work to construct the institutional foundation without which that work would come to naught. Thus, Republicans often employed the figure of salvational abandonment, which will become the most concrete trace of Whitman's debt to the thronging trope in "Poem of the Road":

> Leave the axe in the tree, and the plough in the furrow . . .
> Who strives well today shall be victor tomorrow
> Who loses for freedom his loss shall be gain.[36]

Many poems classify this as a repetition of the fathers' sacrifice, thus doubling its power as both a mark of commitment and an act of remembrance. In similarly coming out, the people pay a homage that is itself the opposite of parasitic reliance on the fathers' achievement. The following Republican campaign poem, lifted from the poet Alfred B. Street's "Fourth of July Ode," turns on the prompt to mimic that nation-founding rally: "In its field stood the plow—the axe ceased in the wood. . . . From city and glen throngs were poured like a flood."[37] In this poem, remembering "that nation-founding rally" is barely distinguishable from repeating it to save the land from slavery, just as the dynamics of the people's formation cannot be separated from the intent spurring it: "And proudly their sons now remember that day, / And in triumph will sweep their oppressors away." That occupation, in other words, is a function of memory itself, which concentrates the dispersed experiences of the past into a new world power. By the same token, forgetting is equivalent to handing "the land where burned [the fathers'] altar fires" over to the Slave Power.[38]

In this way, once it entered the repertoire of party antislavery, the thronging trope often captured the turning point in antislavery's projected national history: when the people throw off the shackles of party, reject the intermediaries of politicians, and spring into action to take the nation's future into their own hands. In short, it could figure "the uprising of the People in resistance to the concentrated Slave Power."[39] So well suited was the traditional trope to this long-anticipated development that the organ more responsible than any other for orchestrating the Republican party's formation, the *New York*

Tribune, employed it proleptically just before the party emerged and in doing so brought to the surface the millennialism always implicit in the trope:

> The passage of the Nebraska bill will arouse and consolidate the most gigantic, determined, and overwhelming party for freedom that the world ever saw. We may already see in the future its gathering groups, on every hill-side, in every valley, and on every prairie in the free States. We hear the deep and ominous murmur of the earnest voices of its myriad slowly-moving masses. We behold in their faces the serious and unalterable determination of their purposes in behalf of freedom. We see the gigantic array gradually approach, closing its thick ranks, and moving onward with a force that no merely human power or human institution can resist. It sweeps along with the force of the tempest and the tornado.[40]

What begins as a vague forecast suddenly becomes, through the very act of anticipation, an unexpected spectacle that so shakes the nation's governing assumptions as to leave none of them intact. The prophetic astonishment of "We hear. . . . We behold. . . . We see" promises that the spontaneous unity that is now hidden and inert will take over all perception as surely as it overwhelms all obstacles. Although the sudden occupation will match and counter the gradual insinuation of the oligarchy into the nation's institutions, its projected instant appearance belies its actual roots in the surviving impulse, which had from the beginning been fated to counter the conspiratorial triumph. It is presumably the speaker's ability to feel the shock of the Kansas-Nebraska Act stirring those roots that opens him to the ecstatic prophecy. Hence the passage is followed by what might seem, out of context, a qualification to the vision of abrupt conquest: "The decisive events of history come but slowly. They have their source, as the great rivers have theirs, in the little rills that trickle in the hidden recesses of the plain and the mountain."[41] In the startling visibility of currents once too quiet to be noticed, the people finally realize the glimmers of sovereignty that the most thorough usurpation and the most discouraging demoralization could not smother.

This same dynamic is evident in Whitman's use of the trope in "Song of Myself," when the speaker saves himself from despair by joining, after his gravest crisis of incapacitation, the "unending procession." The banner displayed by the newly emboldened marchers is of a long provenance, so

that the sovereignty implied in the "swift ordinances" is at once an entirely new and expected consummation:

> I troop forth replenished with supreme power, one of
> an average unending procession,
> . . . . . .
> and
> we pass all [North-American] boundary lines.
> Our swift ordinances are on their way over the whole
> earth,
> The blossoms we wear in our hats are the growth of
> two thousand years. (1860, 82–3)

Though Whitman makes no reference to slavery here, he borrows the historical trajectory that belongs to the fusion of antislavery millennialism with a conventional party trope, the image of the people "trooping in one magnificent advance—heart knit to heart, and foot planted to foot."[42] The border-breaking march across the nation's geographical divisions delivers an "ordinance" to the world, which cleanses history of the defeats and frustrations that had just brought the speaker to the brink of collapse—a history in which those boundary lines were the scars left when humanity's hopes were dashed. Whitman's speaker is "replenished" in the same way the citizens in the party passage are transfigured by their new membership in what had once lived only in impulse and is now realized in "myriad slowly moving masses," whose sweeping movement and convergence betokens the moment when long accumulations and frustrations burst forth in public action.

Both Whitman and the *New York Tribune* borrow here from the Free Soil deployment of the trope a half decade earlier. In those representations, the very plains and mountains requiring protection from slavery's territorial encroachments join forces to funnel the sound of the people's awakening into action.[43] In both campaign poems and "Poem of the Road," this reciprocal relationship between the land and those journeying on it rests on new channels of communication opening within the nation stultified by a debased discourse: "They speak—and that voice shall awaken mankind / From the sleep that has rested so long on the mind."[44] In many such instances of the trope, the freed utterance alone reoccupies the land and balks the conspirators.

The pledge, given by the thronging trope, of an organic political surge whose utterances shock the nation into vigilance was well suited to meeting the political antislavery's long-standing complaint that slavery made up for its inherent weaknesses in an excess of discipline and organizational strength, while freedom, strong in its fruits and attributes, lacked that one capacity that alone could sustain those strengths. "Let Freedom have her phalanx as well as slavery."[45] The utopian spaces of thronging were meant to sketch the route for a spontaneous mobilization, which had been left unbuilt through years of selfish oligarchic consolidation. The mechanisms of that consolidation had left efforts for freedom "disjointed, disorganized, and often waning," but now "all are wheeling in one solid, irresistible march."[46]

This goal helps to explain why "Poem of the Road," as we shall see, both truncates and expands on the trope's typical narrative stages. Whitman's road brings its travelers to no final place, whereas Republican thronging must converge, after its initial burst, to dismantle the networks of usurpation: "The fires of Liberty have started up in every town and country of the northern states; and they are now fast bending their towering flames to one common center, and threatening to destroy all political machinery."[47] The nation is mapped along lines that make permanently operative the energy of the unplanned surge, even after that energy has congealed into a new authority. That is the connecting link between the endless journeying demanded in "Poem of the Road" and the more clearly goal-driven thronging trope. And both, as we shall see, ground recovery on a mode of battle.

As examined in this study's first chapter, Whitman's antinomian rhetoric of individual disentanglement from cultural networks owes something to this fusion of antislavery appeals with party tropes. Thronging enters into this rhetorical alliance as the metaphor by which the culture imagined how individual acts of unfettering spontaneously develop into collective will. Thus, the following Republican appeal employs language reminiscent of the call found in *The Eighteenth Presidency!* to break the chains woven by decadent organizations, which have no organic life but a surplus of residual cultural power:

> The inspiration necessary to produce a combined movement is not caught from creeds, ceremonies, nor effete truisms, but from a living, all-pervading truth which comes home to every man's consciousness.

> And then there needs no marshalling for the conflict. The recruiting sergeant is a supernumerary then. There is then a spontaneous movement in the same direction, and this undisciplined mass will sweep every effete, yet well-appointed army that may oppose its progress.[48]

However Whitmanesque this prophecy sounds, "Poem of the Road" does not make the "recruiting sergeant" supernumerary. Indeed, that figure is the poem's voice, and his role is expanded to such a degree as to overshadow the sweeping away of corrupt institutional restraints. He is the general who so fully qualifies himself as to become the universal recruiter, whose appeals take over the poem. Despite that difference between this passage and Whitman's poem, both assume that "the spontaneous movement in the same direction" takes its impetus from the triumph of a "living, all pervading truth" over the local webs of cultural definition seeking to keep the citizen in his place.

Indeed, in its antislavery iterations, the trope was as much about consciousness as about practical action. The resounding hills stir the people into a sense that what had once flickered through their constitutions will break into open light when they devote themselves to a collective endeavor: "Rouse brothers, rouse to life and to action / Liberty's spirit that sleeps in our breast!"[49] Thus one piece saw thronging as turning the people's "purpose," their "aim and scope" into something so much more tangible that it becomes invulnerable to institutionalized power. "Only let them rally, and with quick insight and manly bearing, march on in defense of Right and Justice, and no corrupt administration, no coward or cowed party, will be able to baffle their will, or withstand their onset."[50] The despots are overwhelmed less by the strength in numbers than by the visible signs that inner impulse has broken out in expression and propelled itself over the nation's venues of communication. The shock of this news produces a virtuous circle further demoralizing the enemy and rousing patriots to greater action:

> Hail! The battle-call is pealing, louder notes and louder still!
> For the beacon heights are blazing, on the heights of every hill!
> Freemen's hearts rejoice to hear them, freemen's eyes with rapture see,

As they rouse the might of manhood, in the strife of liberty.
Foemen watch with shrinking terror, how those beacons
flush the sky—
Faithless hearts and unbelieving echo not that glorious
cry—
But still Freedom's legions rally, swift as clouds by
whirlwinds pressed,
Hand clasps hand, eyes meet, and thrilling, swells fresh
hope in every breast.[51]

This final conceit—that collective purpose will be sealed in a rousing physical intimacy—has more direct bearing on "Calamus," to be examined in the next chapter, than on "Poem of the Road." But the image of the visible and audible universe taken over by the messages it carries, the sense of boundaries crossed and limitations renounced, the notion that the rallying legions themselves become part of the world's organic energy, the warning that numb, unbudgeable laggards will be left behind, the promise that the throngers will effuse their solidarity like a natural excretion—all will inform that single poem. The beacons in Whitman's poem warn against not an enemy but a more insidious root principle of national development, which the poem sets out to delegitimize and disarm.

"Poem of the Road" does not begin as a thronging poem. A single individual embarks on a journey, and rather than instill the power of that movement into the road, he takes from the road the powers that in the thronging trope inhere in the collective gathering and pooling of previously segregated citizens' energies. Despite the ambiguity in the source of the power in the early versions of the trope, it can still be concluded that Whitman, at least initially, reverses the source of the inspiration so that the decision to turn from fixed routes of movement itself begins to constitute the new American identity of the traveler. When all social distinctions break down, as they do at the start of "Poem of the Road" (more universally than in the party trope),[52] the road itself must take the credit for that unlocking of social barriers, "the profound lesson of reception, neither preference or denial"

(1856, 224). Like the less solitary party travelers, Whitman's speaker finds the universal bonds between a diverse people dawning on him through the very action of fusing with the routes of travel. The speaker recognizes the throngers' immunity to class divisions as he first sets out—a stage that in the thronging poems would be too early. It comes before any other person is around to illustrate it; so fundamental is it to the properties of the road that it occurs from the moment the speaker plants his foot there. Yet this achievement is not premature: Whitman excavates the process that the thronging trope leaves unrepresented and implied. It is as if the poem were fleshing out, in its early stages, the standard trope's prehistory. Even though Whitman's speaker starts out "afoot and lighthearted" (1856, 223), not alarmed, he makes that choice freely and individually—as does, presumably, each single thronger in the party tradition.[53] In keeping with this shift in emphasis, Whitman presents that decision in the voice of the character making the journey.

The party trope's story is almost always told by an outside observer, in order to approximate the effect of a startling report whose broadcast throughout the nation only augments further its sweeping power. As bearer of this news, the narrator in the prose or verse pieces is so shaken by the spectacle that he hesitates to detract from the spontaneity of the march by including commands to accelerate the process. At times the speaker includes an invitation or even an exhortation to rally but rarely an injunction with the portentous and harsh tone conveyed by a direct challenge—elsewhere so prominent a mode in party discourse. The speaker in Whitman's poem, on the other hand, not only gives a personal account of his at first solitary journey but eventually enjoins others to follow with an authority he has earned through the transformations he has undergone in the experience. He moves from the *isolato* embarking on a journey to become the collective voice typical of the thronging poem, except one who assumes boldly a function that seems foreign not only to the thronging trope but even to Whitman's own Emersonian mistrust of mediation: that of recruiting, making himself the agent of the people's subsequent convergence.

Despite the ongoing differences in point of view and emphasis, by the last few verse paragraphs, "Poem of the Road" becomes a full-fledged thronging poem. Some features of his "call" will be examined later, but the penultimate verse paragraph bears most clearly the generic marks:

Allons! be not detained!
Let the paper remain on the desk unwritten, and
the book on the shelf unopened!
Let the tools remain in the work-shop! let the
money remain unearned! (1856, 239)[54]

To be sure, these injunctions tingle with Whitman's disdain for the mystifying bond between fixed social roles and the fetishized products or tools that facilitate them, a disdain the speaker has already expressed overtly earlier within the poem itself. Indeed, in the very next few lines, Whitman innovates by blending this standard conceit into his own more typical plea to the people not to heed the voice of the preacher, teacher, and lawyer. The significance of this seamless reaccommodation of the trope for Whitmanesque purposes, to be examined more fully later, itself owes something to the broader antislavery prophecy of the people shaking off encumbrances.

Indeed, an undercurrent of the attitude toward the people's work, displayed in the three lines from Whitman's poem, runs through the original republicanism of the thronging tradition as well: it is the obverse of the faith that the throngers' specialized labor skills will stand them in good stead when pooled in a collective surge. The people must abandon the illusion that Whitman punctures in *The Eighteenth Presidency!*: that the nation can continue in its natural development simply on the strength of its teeming individual pursuits. "Poem of the Road" addresses that fallacy from a different angle even as it taps the rhetorical resources of the party iterations for that purpose. Thus, in its progress toward a more fundamental challenge, the poem comes upon the thronging trope's central gesture, as illustrated in this Republican passage whose first two lines so closely resemble Whitman's:

Come leave the anvil, and the plough,
Work bench and writing-stool,
And show all worthless oligarchs,
That we, the people, rule.[55]

In both Whitman's poem and this passage, the people, by leaving their work, invest it with its true majesty through a public display of a power made possible by abandonment.

These marked echoes of party rhetoric, so prominent at the end of the poem and so absent at the beginning, direct our attention to the stages by which Whitman's poem works itself up to becoming a thronging poem. Breaking down those stages will reveal how Whitman frames the arrogation of sovereignty, announced more concretely and swiftly in the party iterations. While "Poem of the Road" eventually sounds a call to arms that betrays its affiliation with a party tradition, it comes to that moment by conjuring a complete imaginary space that the party tradition only sketches out or presumes. In its structure, the poem digs underneath the trope's standard narrative in order to make the people's renunciation of passive citizenship, the result of a temporary emergency in the party tradition, an indispensable permanent attribute of national and psychic self-constitution.

At first the road gives the speaker a special vantage point to appreciate the wonders of the nation, and his account of this, alternately ecstatic and bucolic, seems to send the poem in one direction before an abrupt turn. That turn comes when the national resources displayed before the traveler's eyes become a temptation he must resist under the threat of confinement to "the public road." The distinction between "public road" and "open air" enters the poem briefly to stop the speaker from indulging in his joyous experience of "the cheerful voice of the public road—the gay fresh sentiment of the road" (226). That renunciation itself is more important than the distinction between spaces, which scarcely holds up for more than a few verse paragraphs, but allows the speaker to turn his attention both outward and inward. Why lingering in the public aura of good cheer would be indulgent becomes clear only later, but at these early stages it abruptly opens the poem to the question of heroism. The speaker's personal address to an apostrophized road—"I am not afraid to leave you"—is followed in short order with his reflection on "heroic deeds" as "conceived in the open air" (226). That in turn triggers the speaker to isolate two spaces from the impressive and inviting world that the road had earlier presented as a private show.

In fitting himself for the heroic deeds that only the open air will foster, the speaker nationalizes himself on grounds that prepare the utopian no-where of the road, onto which he later entices his followers:

> From this hour, I ordain myself loosed of limits
> and imaginary lines!

Going where I list—my own master, total and
absolute,
. . . . . .
The east and the west are mine, and the north
and the south are mine. (1856, 226–7)

The speaker moves from an illocutionary act ("I ordain myself") to a proprietary claim, suggesting that the very act of ordaining has itself endowed him, that in declaring himself loosed he has won title to the nation. That title first seems due to an anticipated occupation but eventually amounts to a recognition of heroic potential that will later traverse what it already embodies. These interlocking transformations prepare for the moment when the speaker himself clears out, through his own declarations, the road he will then invite others to join on his own rigorous conditions. In thronging poems, the conquest of the nation's four geographical points occurs through the boundary-breaking power of voice, which both announces and reverberates the thronging. Thus, in one Republican poem, the nation's actual geographical divisions, the pretext for compromise, dissolve to re-form as the channel for the people's trumpeting:

The day of Compromise is past,
Liberty knows no bounds:
From North to South, from East to West,
Freedom's cry resounds![56]

In proclaiming themselves free from geographical borders, the speakers of both this campaign poem and "Poem of the Road" play on the party cliché of the true patriot knowing, in his devotion to the nation, "no North—no South—no East—no West."[57] Only the campaign poem, however, transforms a pretext for capitulation into the condition for a new defiance by doing what will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter: resetting the test of patriotism from the geographical extent of loyalty to a geographical encompassing of the nation. Whitman's speaker has yet to link defiance to his new self-nationalization. That will occur after he completes his own epic adornment to invite his recruits to travel through and by his own internalized spaces. However, that the speaker has unlocked his own inner geographic potential already fits him for that role and aligns him with the thronging trope's premises.

This stage in Whitman's poem cannot be reduced to a party's thronging, but it bears a remarkable similarity not only to that trope's general implications but also to particular micro-narratives embedded within its longer chain of events. In the following widely reproduced 1848 Free Soil poem, indebted to the popular song "I See Them on Their Winding Way," the occupation of the land from diverse starting points stirs heroism from the recesses of the self to the surface:

A moment from your toil forebear—
A mighty sound is on the air!
A great deed stirreth in its sleep—
At one bold shout to life 'twill leap![58]

This poem then, like "Poem of the Road," follows this resurgence with the one act of inspiration that will give it national force and a growing collective momentum. Taking into oneself the atmosphere of this new national formation realizes its potential in a single moment and unleashes its true recipient:

Then one deep draught of Freedom's air,
One firm resolve to do and dare,
One long, loud peal unto the skies,
And slumbering millions will arise![59]

In Whitman's version of this moment, the inhalation does not immediately trigger a collective echo because the poem drags out the process of recruitment, which, in the party poem, occurs in an instant by dint of the land's communicative efficiency. For that recruitment to occur in "Poem of the Road," the speaker has to forgo communication until he himself has come to embody the utopian space in which the nation is concentrated and idealized. This comes out in the lines surrounding his claim to the east, west, north, and south:

I inhale great draughts of air,
. . . . . .

I am larger than I thought!
I did not know I held so much goodness! (1856, 227)

Of course, the inhaled breath of air derives from a traditional romance motif common to, but not exclusive to, the thronging tradition and Whitman's poem:

the already qualified hero's taking the last measure of strength from the field upon which he must fight, imbibing from it the energy he must expend to save it. The single inhaler of freedom's air has a different function in the two poems, however. In the party poem, he is representative of a process that continues to tumble forward upon his initiation, so that what follows repeats but does not depend on his inspiration. In Whitman's poem it is the inspiration itself that frees the speaker to embody the nation and return what its "men and women" have given him: "You have done such good to me, I would do the same to you" (227). Whereas the party poem has already, as one would expect, sent the citizens out from their farms and workshops, Whitman's speaker has to complete and refine his absorption of the land so that the process will no longer depend on the cheerful communion of the panoramic view his travel opens up but rather will equip him with nation-forming power he can then wield. This determination propels the speaker on to his next venture, where he draws in others by means of scattering parts of himself. Without this new economy, continuing his trip would be little more than indulging himself, and that new economy depends on his having reached completion in his surplus strength. In other words, in Whitman's poem the speaker needs to be heroically equipped merely in his capacity as recruiter.

Whitman's speaker assumes a set of mutually interlocking responsibilities: to take those powers within himself, to return them to their source in the people, and then to announce the dynamics of that interchange so regularly as to cut out a common path by his very words. The speaker's dedication to communicating this chain of accomplishments becomes equivalent to the echoing sound of the thronging trope, which also accelerates the very process it announces. As with his self-ordaining, the speaker's repetitions, which he explicitly identifies as such, themselves create the collective medium that binds the travelers together.

> I will recruit for myself and you as I go,
> I will scatter myself among men and women as
> I go,
> I will toss the new gladness and roughness among
> them. (1856, 227)

This fantasy of a fair return then produces the "perfect men and women" he imagines appearing, who share in the "goodness" he has at last recog-

nized within himself. He husbands their transfiguration by donating what came from them but has been purified by its absorption within himself. That achievement eventually rebounds to him; his receptive capacity continues to grow when his own internalized embodiment of the road falls subject to his partly self-created recruits: "Why are there men and women that while they are nigh me the sun-light expands my blood?" (230). This is typical of *Leaves of Grass*, where the speaker, as we have seen in chapter 2, makes himself the channel of communication for what the larger culture represents as transpersonal mechanisms of collective republican development. Similarly, in "Poem of the Road," he surveys thoroughly the field for action, which in the thronging poems emerges spontaneously through the people's movement. It is thus in defining the "here" itself that the speaker makes himself fit for his journey, and his dwelling on the "here" defers, perhaps permanently, the arrival to another place.

As in so many thronging passages already presented (especially prose passages), the speaker imagines the appearance of the new men and new women hypothetically before actually perceiving them through his senses (227–8). But in the poem's usual fashion, it holds off the moment when the prophecy materializes in its full glory. The speaker has been made anew by his inhalation and seems determined to map out this space that has charged him with national power before welcoming his cotravelers. So the shift, again typical of the trope, from abstract prophecy to "Now I see" maps the space itself and "the secret of the making of the best persons" harbored there. The "great deed" that "overwhelms law and mocks all authority" must in the meantime go without any individual or collective agent (228).

Accordingly, the poem is briefly taken over with the refrain "Here is," which leads the critic Harold Aspiz to pose an important question: "Where, however, is the persona's 'Here'?" Aspiz concludes that it is the persona's own "expanding consciousness," making it "a voyage into the interior of the persona's liberated self."[60] Though that answer is borne out by the text, it would seem to belie the affinity between Whitman's imaginary road and the paths named in party thronging. But the party trope had, despite the references to lakes, mountains, and towns, also constructed a utopian space in which the citizen finds both the occasion and the avenue for his realization into true republican citizenship. Thronging roads were cut out as needed by what a Whig piece called the "footsteps of the people": "The true sovereigns, the

great people of the United States, have been in motion, and, when they move, a broad path is made which can be seen from afar, and followed without danger of deviating into crooked ways."[61] And in both Whitman's poem and the thronging tradition, the space breeds the forces within the self amenable to defiance, to communion, and eventually to joint action with the other travelers: once so charged, it can scarcely be defined beyond that which is traversable by "the footsteps of the people" in their sovereign capacity.

In this medium, he and his followers inhale what pervades the new air, the happiness from "the efflux of the soul." This ultimate blending of the road, the inspiring air, and the travelers' own effusions brings to completion the series of qualifying tests: "Now it flows into us—we are rightly charged" (230). This symbiotic feeding triggers the speaker to map his surroundings on new terms. He no longer seeks to define either what "here" is or what "is" here but, rather, sees the journeyers' new ground as the site of their gushing "freshness and sweetness": "Here rises the fluid and attaching character" (230). This character becomes a self-sufficient, self-generating system; everything needed "sprouts fresh and sweet . . . out of itself," exudes toward it, falls from it, or heaves beneath it (230–1).

The last "here," then, binds the citizens in an ecstatic recognition of possibility, similar to but more intense than those found in party thronging. The Whitmanesque "shuddering longing ache of contact" (231) propels the poem into an explicit recruitment, more commanding than the earlier scattering of himself in a harvest:

> Allons! Whoever you are, come travel with me!
> Traveling with me, you find what never tires
>
> The earth never tires! (1856, 231)

The repetition of "never tires" suggests that, in setting foot on the ground, the recruits will tap an endlessly renewable source that they and the earth cocreated, so that the motion of the road calls up a latent power and makes the journey's permanence a discovery reached in action. The "Allons," which becomes the speaker's refrain, is, as C. Carroll Hollis observed, reminiscent of that song so central to the nineteenth century's image of Revolution—"La Marseillaise"—and hence anticipates what becomes by the end of the poem the revolutionary charge that the speaker will give those who join him.

M. Wynn Thomas takes that point further by linking Whitman's use of "Allons" specifically to the Republican appropriation of "La Marseillaise" in what was more or less the party's official campaign song for 1856.[62] The very phrase itself, then, prepares the poem for what will come later: Whitman's theoretical intervention into the debate between the conservative and the Republican views of historical accomplishment.

The speaker's recruitment strategy is at once inclusive and rigorous. He has already broken down the ordinary divisions of social status, gender, and race, and he demands now the heroic attributes that will be worthy of the road's transformative energy. In specifying this requirement, the speaker eventually fuses the language of republican citizenship with the language of heroic readiness. The travelers must come with qualities that they can borrow from the land, qualities belonging to Whitman's cluster of attributes that propel the citizen to intervene into the nation's clogged political instruments: "health, defiance, gaiety, self-esteem, curiosity!" (232). When the speaker proceeds to name the more active characteristics of an heroic adventure, it seems as if those first requirements were nothing more than the source for a more practical test: "He traveling with me needs the best blood, thews, endurance, / None may come to the trial till he or she bring courage and health" (232). He goes on to explain that the health is a sign that the traveler has not already spent the best of himself but is able to donate it to what he discovers on the road. Expending themselves will not only qualify travelers for the journey but endow with their energies the very road they extract goodness from. The lavish scattering of what is subsequently earned in the hypothetical city renounces accumulation as the object of the journey, but it also precludes building new permanent structures in order to render unnecessary more travel: "Allons! We must not stop here! / However sweet these laid-up stores, however convenient this dwelling, we cannot remain here!" (231). With a makeshift mode of expenditure, the travelers begin to resemble an army living off the land—an army with no reachable goal.

That broad conclusion shows that the poem is partly a spiritual allegory with a metaphoric system akin in some ways to, for instance, the model for never-ending expansion in Emerson's "Circles." The speaker's rigorous interdiction of accumulation and of rest, however, already sets the stage for what comes closer and closer to the surface in the speaker's directives: a model for the nation's future development that precludes any fixed set-

tlement. The travelers must not stop for reasons that go well beyond ensuring their individual self-cultivation. As Aspiz points out, "Whitman translates the nineteenth-century idea of Progress into a vision in which general human advancement is paralleled by the progress of the individual man and woman."[63] The party discourse of the day was itself absorbed with that parallel. To detect the ideological resonance of the speaker's prohibition against stopping, we must look beyond thronging itself to one of the antislavery sentiments increasingly attached to the trope by the 1850s: a critique of the nation's political culture as betraying the central command of the Revolution.

In their campaign against the seductive allure of compromise, the political antislavery movement had to fluctuate between two strategies of demystification—a fluctuation that mirrored the nation's regular pattern of affirming a new permanent equilibrium each time the dominant parties had brought to rest yet one more slavery crisis. The first strategy was exposing the calls for compromise during the crisis as a self-defeating capitulation to unsatisfiable slaveholding demands; after the defeat of these attempts, the movement turned to the second strategy, that is, resisting the complacency that allowed Northern conservatives, the overall political culture, and a supine electorate to recast those agreements retrospectively as a final settlement that must end all further turmoil and debate. In the years 1854–56, events had placed Republicans in such an advantageous position for the second task that it fell somewhat into the background. When the government had explicitly repealed the 1820 Missouri compromise and thus implicitly abrogated that great apogee of a final settlement, the 1850 compromise measures, Northern conservatives couldn't persuasively frame their acquiescence as simple compliance with the terms of an already negotiated peace (though they still tried). As Salmon Chase bitingly remarked, "the finalists have become agitators."[64] On the other hand, the very fact that the Kansas-Nebraska Act and subsequent proslavery outrages in Kansas showed how impossible it was to placate the Slave Power intensified what had become a long-standing rhetorical project to debunk the comforting trope of settlement on theoretical, as well as on practical, grounds.

The 1852 platform of the Free Democrats, the party whose nomination of John Hale was so enthusiastically encouraged by Whitman, condemned theoretically a principle that the Democrats had overtly embraced and the Whigs had implicitly conceded: "that the doctrine that any human law is a finality and not subject to repeal, is not in accord with the creed of the founders of our government, and is dangerous to the liberties of the people."[65] Surrounding planks make clear that the Fugitive Slave Law is the principal law in question, but the prominence of that context makes it all the more significant that the party would approach the matter at so high a level of generality in a stand-alone plank. In doing so, they were participating in a broader rhetorical project to represent the compromisers' palliations as an ahistorical quietism that stops the fathers' ongoing mission in its tracks.

The political antislavery movement represented the faith in a final settlement of the slavery issue both as a delusion and as a real danger amounting to national suicide. The two branches of this critique met in what "finality" required: a suppression of the natural energizing forces that counter it. Thus, in a long satirical treatment of Northern conservative remedies for national crises, Republican Edward Wade mockingly celebrated the "finality physic" as the conservatives' "all-healing ointment for the convalescent union." The physician turns out to be a quack, who saves the patient by draining her life-force: he "bleed[s] her of every drop of freedom left in her veins."[66] This cure that kills realizes the conservative dream of a people who have forfeited their right to sovereignty by willingly submitting, under the nostrum of national healing, to inanition. A few years earlier a Free Democrat reduced this analogy to its essential terms: "finality is death."[67]

According to this metaphor, renouncing finality confirms that freedom is not an achieved condition but is "the only principle, in fact, that gives life and vigor to our [r]epublican system."[68] And the very regulatory discursive authority seeking to squelch that life ends up defeating its own purpose by doubling the power of the people's eventual resurgence: when the people throw off the constraint, their utterance becomes a bursting forth as redemptive in its sudden appearance as in its specific demands. If the material and ideological forces constricting the nation's paths of development turn out to be weaker than the internal forces that forbid silence and expose a factitious peace, then the millennial of national salvation was at hand. To Charles Durkee no "cobweb resolutions" can hold back "the onward march of the present age"

when they attempt to controvert incontrovertible eternal laws. "'Agitation' will go on; 'finality' will pass away; the people will become regenerated, and our country redeemed."[69] In his letter to Emerson appended to the 1856 edition, Whitman echoes Durkee both in its content and in a tone that suggests an inevitability so unshakeable as to allow pithy elaboration: "Always America will be agitated and turbulent . . . taking shape" (357). No imagined progress can be real that does not affirm instruments that match its kinetic force.

Even before the thronging trope became attached to party antislavery, a critique of finality lurked within it. In representing the people stirring the land until it ceases to be a fixed space and becomes a path, the trope foresaw an awakened citizenry reversing the decline into rigid patterns of class rule or despotism. Forestalling that decline, the people make the Revolution permanent in their commitment to take the reins in their own hands. When Republicans massaged further those implications, they were only applying the principle of an endless popular intervention that already inhered within the trope, even if the following example also captures a Whitmanesque moment: "Their tramp is unceasing. . . And tyrants shall rule / The nation no more."[70] Given the natural affinity for the trope to the antislavery case against a permanent settlement, it is not surprising that Charles Sumner, in one of his first speeches in the Senate as a new coalition-bred Free Soiler, injected in a long disquisition against finality an image of the people thronging. He hears finality's death knell in the irresistible advance of the people toward higher degrees of national realization in antislavery conviction and action: "all who can put their ears humbly to the ground will hear and comprehend its incessant and advancing tread."[71] This eternal rumbling, audible to those wise enough to detach themselves from present exigencies, is the metaphoric antithesis to the deathly stillness ordained by finality.

Similarly, Whitman draws out the buried implications of the thronging trope by assigning the road the same double duty that it plays in Sumner's conceit; it is not only the meeting ground of a once-segregated people but itself a figure for the path of the nation's development. As with the people in the antislavery prophecy of a recovery from the death of a final settlement, for Whitman no return from the road is possible unless the people, in the suicidal choice examined in the last chapter, relinquish the mission the fathers passed down to repeat the Revolution rather than live off its fruits. The journeyers' "irresistible call to depart" (233) constitutes them as worthy cotravelers.

Whereas in the party trope the home is abandoned for the broader mission, Whitman's speaker—long before he makes the formal call to leave the workshop and the office—adjures his recruits never to stop traveling. He fits them for battle before calling them to battle, and the main qualification derives from the logistics of the journey: they must feed off the land, not off what it has already given, the laid-up stores. As long as they obey this injunction, the world around them continues to nurture them, and its beauty fuses with the beauty the speaker notes when he first recruits the travelers. On these terms, the land can give its fruits freely. This notion of the land and the people reaching an apotheosis in their eschewing passivity had always been a feature of the trope's millennial fantasy of a nation made up of universal agents.

Confident that they can repeat his disentanglement from the world, the speaker urges his recruits to repeat his original jaunty commitment to break loose from "the holds that would hold me" (227)—now a much more solemn gesture. Typically, in the thronging trope it is at the later stage of convergence that the march becomes an unstoppable natural force. After the gathering is completed, "[n]o strength can restrain it, no force can retain it, / What'er may resist, it breaks gallantly through."[72] So too "Poem of the Road" sees their movement fueled by "power, liberty, the earth, the elements" (232), again coordinating forces that the Romantics saw as already in league; but Whitman's recruits are enjoined to acquire this power before they form an unstoppable army. Whereas in the campaign poem the new army breaks through the restraining strength and the retaining force that meets it, "Poem of the Road" demands those powers be brought to bear not so much in the marching as in the original issuing forth. The poem's vision of the place from which each journeyer comes forth is much bleaker than in the thronging trope; accordingly, the poem digs deeper into the hindrances holding each individual traveler back. Contrasting the road with the ghastly double life of the traveler at home breaks the poem open not only to an explicit political program but to the full force of the antifinality critique.

As the journey, still hypothetical for his recruits, continues in the part of the poem organized around the refrain "allons," the places threatening to lure the travelers into abandoning their endless journey become increasingly small, personal, and dangerous. The first is the public road the speaker cheerfully abandons; the next is the city, which can nurture the journeyers as they lavish

themselves on it but must also be left; the third is the more affect-neutral "house," in which the journeyers must not linger. The house receives a brief description in the shortest thus far of the verse paragraphs beginning with "Allons": "You must not stay in your house, though you built it, or though it has been built for you" (237). In one of the few additions to the first 1856 version that Whitman makes in 1860, the residents are not simply "staying" but also "sleeping and dallying there" (1860, 326). The image of perilous sleep reverberates throughout party appeals, which seek to awaken a dangerously indifferent citizenry from their complacency.[73] Whitman's 1860 addition makes the house seem something more threatening than simply the structure into whose upkeep the residents have poured their accumulated efforts. It comes closer to the romance archetype that the critic Patricia Parker has identified as the "protective but potentially indolent bower."[74]

Though the house was a common metaphor for a national Union built long ago, which may or may not require renovation, the house's function in this part of the poem is to individualize and intensify the call that immediately precedes it: "come forth." Such injunctions as "come forth," "come with," "come from," and "come on," which pepper the campaign thronging poems, reflect how that genre supplemented the revolutionary call of "allons" with its parallel demand of departure and sacrifice; it is, in other words, part of the tradition's development from the purely martial metaphor. Within "Poem of the Road," "come forth" shifts the focus away from what the travelers will be going to, over, or with. All that matters now is what they will be going "out of." Why that should be the case becomes clear in the poem's most somber passage, where the speaker universalizes the individual lives of the journeyers until each of those private lives comes to be seen as a lonely reenactment of the nation's collective self-silencing.

The call "come forth" brings on not only a different approach to the journeyers' mission but also a different stance from the speaker, who is now the all-knowing seer from whom his addressees are unable to hide their alienation: "Allons! out of the dark confinement! / It is useless to protest—I know all, and expose it" (1856, 237). The speaker then immediately fills out the "all" in a passage that, with its pessimistic account of the self trapped in custom and relation, seems more akin to the later pessimistic short clusters of the 1860 edition than to the earlier parts of "Poem of the Road." An early "Allons" section had explicitly included the apostrophe "Listen" (233), and the others had

implied the same injunction. But the speaker is so dedicated to representing a nightmare vision of each journeyer's daily experience that listening gives way to a startling visual exposure: "Behold through you as bad as the rest! . . . / Behold a secret silent loathing and despair!" (237). The speaker has become the prophetic voice of doom, and the choice for the potential journeyers he had once enthusiastically invited suddenly becomes life or death. How the speaker frames those choices explains how this most intimate representation in the poem can unleash its subsequent call for national battle.

In its Transcendentalism, the poem maneuvers to elide the distinction between private and public life when it defines the "duplicate of everyone" (237), which it goes on to describe in intimate terms. The passage repeats in miniature the movement in the poem as a whole from the public to the personal, domestic, and intimate—implicating the second in the performative character of the first:

> Formless and wordless through the streets of the
> cities, polite and bland in the parlors,
> In the cars of rail-roads, in steam-boats, in the
> public assembly,
> Home to the houses of men and women, among
> their families, at the table, in the bed-room,
> every where. (237–8)

The confinement is no longer in any particular place; it is life itself, where the self devotes itself to "[k]eeping fair with the customs, speaking not a syllable of itself" (238), like Shelley's "numbers knit / By force or custom." It is as if Whitman were literalizing the central conceit of the thronging trope—that a deeper self called up by the threats to the nation's heritage finds no expression until its vessels leave their daily world. In another sense, the fixed but ultimately ungraspable world that the recruits must flee replaces the enemy army of the thronging trope. Without coordinates, because it is universally dominant, that world offers not a countermarch or retrenchment but a frantic yet static dumb show. In Whitman's poem, the duplicate self is "formless" and, more significantly in the light of the next step, "wordless" (237). When the poem returns to the road, Whitman provides the word that reforges the nexus between individual and group, a nexus manifest in the citizen's daily life only through a ghostly principle.

Whitman leaves each smothered duplicate "speaking . . . never of itself" (238) as the actual unspecified custom-bound words, to which it defers, spew out in a timeless parade of meaninglessness. A different unspoken word operates outside the dark confinement. It is also defined negatively, through its absence; but it is an absence poised to be filled with meaning because what separates it from its human vehicles is not the space of confinement but temporal distance. Thus, when the poem returns to the road, it is defined now specifically by epochs and not by space, "through struggles and wars," stitched together by "the goal that was named" (238). That echoing call to revolution "cannot be countermanded" (238). The travelers must move because the named goal cannot be taken back: once let loose on the world, it commands participation in that world, irrespective of how successful attempts to recruit members to its cause might be. The traveler must choose between the withheld word of his expressionless, though public, seclusion and the withheld retraction of the road. The first, with its recurring participial phrases, leaves the daily round so unpunctuated by declarative moments as to amount to an abnegation of succession, whereas the second poses the opposite threat, when it seems to rule out a goal's typical end by canceling the stage of fulfillment.

The next verse paragraph solves both these puzzles at one stroke by renouncing the principle of accumulative achievement, which the silenced citizens had already exposed as illusory and which the uncountermandable goal had already rendered impossible. The upbraiding questions infuse the processes of nature into what had seemed the discrete and unrelated struggles of self and of nation:

> Have the past struggles succeeded?
> What has succeeded? Yourself? Your nation?
> Nature? (1856, 238)

This formulation crystallizes the meaning of the "through" in the "through struggles and wars" of the two earlier lines. If detached from this context, that prepositional phrase could be taken as implying "while continuing," so that the uncountermanded order simply awaits fulfillment in a final victory, enclosed within its self-contained time frame. The declaration that follows, however, insinuates the temporal interfolding of succeeding events into the definition of success itself. The victorious struggles in retrospect need to be

traveled through in order to consecrate that victory to history. The speaker's stern announcement of this principle explicitly aligns the poem with the antislavery critique of finality:

> Now understand me well—it is provided in the
> essence of things, that from any fruition of
> success, no matter what, shall come forth
> something to make a greater struggle neces-
> sary. (1856, 238)

The phrase "provided in the essence of things" makes nature the common source for the individual and nation, each bound to an organic principle that must be lived out in practice. Having set on the same plane those two vehicles of a universal law, the poem shifts entirely into a poem of revolutionary recruitment, closely resembling the thronging tradition. Indeed, the tone of a stern instructor Whitman adopts here emerges rarely in the thronging poems, but when it does, it almost always comes as a challenge to repeat the work of the fathers a challenge reminiscent of the rebuke that was examined in the previous chapter. "Where is the daring spirit gone / That urged your sainted sires on?"[75] At the point where Whitman strikes this tone, his poem becomes a direct instrument of specifically political recruitment.

The question "What has succeeded?" turns the poem's attention from the "past struggles" to the agents potentially achieving the success, which the speaker then lines up in ascending order of collectivity, so that "your nation" ends up mediating between "yourself" and "Nature." As a result, success becomes dependent not only on succeeding events but also on a proper line of national succession. In that line of succession nature offers up its new fathers for the nation rather than fruition; in a phrase that harks back to the speaker's command, those founders will "come forth" as the need for new struggles "come forth." As it concerns both the traveler and the nation, that kind of succession replaces the inheritance and accumulation the speaker's cotravelers have already been ordered to renounce. "Now understand me well" blocks the recruits from accessing their accumulated gains and throws them back on the "good fortune" that the speaker from the beginning has seen himself as generating outside the confines of his circumstances.

Yet the speaker does not so much sound the call to arms that follows as claim it as his own, just as he had, and indeed just because he had, claimed the

poles of the north, south, east, west: "My call is the call of battle—I nourish active rebellion" (238). While the speaker arrogates the call to himself on the grounds of his amalgamation with the march of history, its source is still the uncountermanded goal rippling through the centuries and the nation's true geography. The speaker's contribution—"I nourish active rebellion"—harks back to the passage where the travelers absorb the fruits of others' labor without any discernable loss from the donors. His assertion, while at the moment resonating with the rigor of a summons, anticipates the final moment, when he offers to give love and himself—except that the recipient is at this earlier point not the recruit but the mission. Less than a specifically targeted rebellion, the speaker demands that the travelers see themselves as successors to the Revolution, in a bond with him that supersedes earlier ties and turns the Revolution's temporary convergence of citizens into an unending historical loop.

The welcoming enthusiasm of the speaker's earlier invitation accordingly yields to a stern enlistment into a self-sacrificing citizens' army. The following passage self-consciously invokes the mythohistorical version of the yeoman revolutionary army's spontaneous formation but also self-consciously lifts that cultural touchstone out of sentimental retrospective accounts, which smooth over the edges of the sacrifice involved (Fourth of July orations often explicitly warned that such sacrifice is easily bleached out through a selective and sanitizing memory). The poem then balances that stark call for sacrifice with a personal reassurance. Even though the second of these verse paragraphs signals a calming concluding descent from the poem's crescendo of passionate enlistment, the two in another respect make a pair in the balance they together strike between warning and reassurance:

> He going with me must go well armed,
> He going with me goes often with spare diet,
> poverty, angry enemies, contentions
>
> Allons! the road is before us!
> It is safe—I have tried it—my own feet have
> tried it well. (1856, 239)

The Republican party similarly sweetened its challenge to the people in reassurances of safety, as in an unusually pacific form of the thronging trope

presented by Republican Thomas Corwin. The people stand condemned for having "abandoned the great highways of the past—the good macadamized roads made for you—every milestone of which was red with revolutionary blood." Just as Whitman's speaker, having eschewed the house "built for you" as an alluring trap, vouches for the road's different kind of safety on the strength of his own prior movement over it, so too Corwin turns to comfort the rebuked people as one would coax a timid friend: "All the Republican party wish to do is to stand up and call you back as a mother calls to her lost child, and put you on the safe old road again."[76]

Before it also adopts the figure of mother, Whitman's poem strangely winnows apart and recombines the terms of the reassurance to the wayward: the speaker's call must offer hardship, not safety, leaving as the only guarantee his having survived passage over the road. He becomes by the end a scout whose earlier heroic endowment by the road promises only the most minimal protection. Here Whitman takes the renunciation of settlement further than the more conservative of the Republican rhetorical appeals: even the fathers' or mothers' road cannot be trusted if it allows its travelers to dodge the "greater struggle" that revolutionary success has made necessary. The road must be seen as always perilous to the feet newly treading on it. As in an 1856 Republican poem employing terms more consonant with Whitman's, the people are not simply returning to what Whittier called the nation's "primal track" but are "threading . . . the old rocky passes of freedom again."[77] If the path had been smoothed in advance rather than simply tried, then the named goal would have been halfway countermanded after all.

In ordering his recruits to leave the workshop, the speaker is able to blend that key stage in the thronging trope with a further warning against being lured back home. Midway through a single line, the abandoned workplaces cease to be where the recruits labored ("Let the tools remain in the workshop") and instead become the cultural state apparatuses that would trap the journeyers in social coordinates inimical to the perpetual tramp:

> Let the school stand! mind not the cry of the
> teacher!
> Let the preacher preach in his pulpit! let the
> lawyer plead in the court, and the judge
> expound the law! (1856, 239)

Thanks to this shift, the imperative "Let" changes from an invitation to a concession. The recruits block out these voices rather than openly challenge them. They need only not "mind" them to continue the journey. What the thronging trope emphasizes—the triumph of an overwhelming sound, heard by its own producers when it bellows through the land, reconfigured as the perfect instrument—is in Whitman's poem achieved only through distance. The siren sounds from home must be ignored for the march to continue.

The relationship between that diminishment and the aural flood of thronging comes out in the poem Whitman wrote when the Civil War broke out: "Beat, Drums, Beat" is a poem of martial recruitment and thus shares many of the gestures of a thronging poem. It also brings in Whitman's typical plea not to heed the culture's dictates. The drums are the poem's recruiters, and they must overwhelm aurally any call that would make the citizen soldiers linger.

> Would the talkers be talking? would the singer attempt
> to sing?
> Would the lawyer rise in the court to state his case
> before the judge?
> Then rattle quicker, heavier drums—you bugles wilder
> blow. (1867, 38a)

The martial sounds muffle the "entreaties" and "expostulations" of prudence and daily life in this poem. The republic can save itself only when its cry for rescue clogs and blocks the nation's communicative routes. This poem shares the urgency of party thronging, but "Poem of the Road" locates the emergency at another level, so that the sounds of home simply fade as the recruit resolves not to "mind" them—a phrasing also used in "Beat, Drums, Beat"—and moves away from the "dark confinement" to accept a bond based not on hearing but on touch, on a parent's nourishing care. Whereas the recruited must ignore the pleas of mother and old man in "Beat Drums, Beat," in "Poem of the Road" sound no longer is the medium of competition; the speaker's own touch replaces it in the final verse paragraph.

If the journeyers resist the call of the voices that they must not mind, they have through that act alone met the terms for receiving the speaker: "I give you myself, before preaching or law" (1856, 239). The exchange he seeks in the final verse paragraph comes through in a tone that seems to annul the stern thronging rhetoric of the previous three. Yet it also promises an end to

finality in a new permanent alliance that will limit the reach of the institutional interests from which the journeyers have escaped. The last line of the poem, "Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?" (239), translates the duty to maintain eternal vigilance into the language of easy companionship. The speaker thus steps down from his platform in the assurance that his terms of membership have been rigorous enough to render unnecessary further commands or stipulations.

"Poem of the Road," then, is a thronging poem without the thronging—without it because Whitman stretches out the stages that precede the actual march and tightens the conditions of membership so that the tale of the people's issuing forth takes over the poem. In its very truncation of the typical thronging poem, however, "Poem of the Road" presses to the surface what was already latent within the tradition and what party antislavery had already wedded to the movement's long-standing demand that the people restore national freedom by incarnating true individual freedom.

In some ways, the thronging tradition, emerging from the intersection of party legitimization and antipartyism, exemplifies the ambivalence in most party discourse toward its own self-representations. The feature of party discourse that celebrated and idealized a party's own formation as the path toward the people's redemption retained an undercurrent of doubt about that remedy. The people storm the citadels of power with their own recovered collective intentionality; but how long can that one rescue mission keep the nation from drifting back toward despotism should the people themselves shrink back to their daily lives? Whitman resolves that tension within the genre, while simultaneously binding it—even more closely than his party does—to the antislavery case against stalling progress at the gates of an enthralling promise: that of a permanent and peaceful completion. The poem's very refusal to become a true thronging poem until it has thoroughly infected its call with a critique of finality indicates how completely Whitman has digested the antislavery principles into a traditional appeal. The result reverses the establishment in "A Boston Ballad" of a home-destroying "here" of retroactive historical cancellation: by the end the speaker makes the road a new home, and himself a foster mother.

In various capacities, then, the speaker replaces the "fathers," whose voice from the past triggers the issuing forth in the thronging trope. But the bond he establishes with each recruit remains individual: "Mon enfant! I give

you my hand!" (239). The earlier "adhesiveness" he promised as part of his appeal is reduced in the poem's final line to a bilateral bond, only hinting at a wider community.[78] Yet the party thronging trope had often named a brotherly solidarity as the final culmination of the arousing, abandoning, and converging. One 1840 Whig account, after going on at some length about how enthusiasm has brought all together "from different and distant quarters," takes the end point as "hail[ing] each other as brethren" and "plight[ing] with hardy good will the mutual hand of fellowship."[79] The "bond of brotherhood" sanctifies and crystallizes an initially disorganizing thronging. In his 1860 edition, Whitman leaves that final stage in the forming of a truly national collectivity to a long cluster not contained in the 1856 edition, where "Poem of the Road" first appeared. That cluster, of course, is "Calamus."

Both the thronging tradition and "Poem of the Road" supplant the nation's legal boundaries in favor of a fictionalized utopian geography. They do that in order to prophesy a moment when the nation's original powers will at last be deployed through their proper conquering medium and instrument. There is a middle realm, of course, between this completely imaginary landscape and the real-world institutional organization of the nation around sites of governmental power and social formations. The 1860 cluster "Calamus" operates in that middle realm. Like "Poem of the Road," it dissolves the nation's actual jurisdictional borders in order to lay out an idealized channel for intercitizen bonds, capable of seizing power through a new kind of sovereignty. Yet, with "Calamus," fashioning such a space is a way of meeting the conservatives' own utopian geography, which, while equally imaginary, was meant to authorize and sanction the all-too-real institutional necessities operating within the nation's political spaces: the autonomy of sovereign states, the division between free states and slave states, and the Union both as a mechanism of federal power and as the final national ideal. In "Calamus," Whitman enters the rhetorical contest conservatives had long dominated when they offered a fantastical and personalized projection of the Union as a geographical medium for national bonding.

CHAPTER FIVE

"Calamus" as an Answer to the Union-Savers

The preceding three chapters have interpreted *Leaves of Grass* as if the cycle were seizing the opportunity given to antislavery by the integration of its prophecy into the terms of party politics, which had long held encoded within them the culture's dominant narratives of national redemption. Whitman amplified those narratives and abstracted them from partisan competition, so as to provide a full mythological framework for the antislavery charge the new party was giving them. Put in the most general terms, these chapters have viewed Whitman as directing through a different channel the rhetorical resources also enjoyed by his party. Yet that approach bypasses what was touched upon in chapter 1: the barriers to the process of fully integrating antislavery into party discourse. Free Soilers and Republicans did not blithely turn party rhetoric to antislavery purposes in an appropriation so organic as to clear away any bars and hindrances. They strained and struggled to represent themselves in terms that would lift the anathema against their very formation. The cultural prohibitions against party antislavery ran so deep in the culture that neither the political earthquake of the Kansas-Nebraska Act nor the already achieved party realignment by 1860, no matter how disruptive, could entirely obviate them. Whitman also participates in the project of breaking down those prohibitions by reclaiming for the antislavery national vision what had seemed the exclusive preserve of procompromise or establishment parties.

The historian Graham Alexander Peck has interpreted the party realignment of the 1850s in these terms. Peck's study is particularly valuable in showing how the party constructed an ideology that, while certainly sincerely felt and deeply rooted in various antislavery traditions, did the primary

cultural work of justifying its own formation. Indeed, the ideology cannot be separated from the self-representation. Peck reminds us of what will be a fundamental premise of this chapter: "northerners had long resisted antislavery politics because they feared its disunionist consequences. They rightly perceived it as a radical innovation on established political practice, and thus they had largely withheld their support from antislavery parties."[1] Yet the party in a mere six years broke through what had once appeared an insuperable barrier. Peck shows that the devising of a new kind of nationalism neutralized the traditional anathemas against party antislavery. The very belief system that held together the strands of the party's thought was also the core rationale for its nationality and hence for its legitimacy. What has generally been seen at the level of appeal, policy positions, tactics, and group interest Peck approaches at the level where party rhetoric carries the most weight. The key problem of the decade's party alignment is "how the Republicans managed so rapidly to invert northern ideas about antislavery politics." Peck concludes that the party did so by "attaching a powerful nationalist ideology to the antislavery movement." In making this case, Peck sets it against Susan Mary Grant's argument that Republicans summoned up an anti-Southern ideology, in effect a Northern nationalism. According to Peck, "'northern nationalism' miscasts the fundamental orientation of Republican nationalist sensibilities."[2]

Peck's transmutation of anti-Southern or Northern nationalism into antislavery nationalism is particularly relevant to Walt Whitman's national rhetoric. Much more than his party, and even more than many of his fellow literary writers also enthusiastic for the new party, Whitman studiously avoids references to "the North" as a nation unto itself—one whose self-respect depended on projecting its power in order to redeem the fathers' project. Whitman succeeded in avoiding that construction despite his party's having made very clear that by "the North" they meant not a region but "the nation conceived as free." Whitman was too canny a rhetorician to believe that such qualifications offered a safeguard against the other side's distortions. Indeed, the care Whitman takes to avoid references to "the North" as a fledgling independent agent, rather than simply as one of many sections of the nation, has contributed to the misapprehension of his Unionism as fundamentally conservative or theoretical—a charge usefully refuted in the recent study that links him to the radical wings of the antislavery movement.

But neither those critics who analyze Whitman's stance on the Union as if it stood apart from other modes of discourse nor that recent critic, to be considered in greater detail later, who interprets the poet's radicalism as outside the party system, can address an inescapable condition of Whitman's moment: that it was primarily through party that the contest over how to imagine the demands the Union made on each citizen was waged. And that is because no other institution had quite so great a stake in claiming a nationality whose requirements on the people would be determined by the contours of the imagined Union. The competition itself gave party a gravitational pull, drawing even the most radical and marginalized abolitionist or slaveholding anti-Unionist into the terms of debate it set (even though the extremes functioned only as bogeymen to tarnish the other side—the antislavery disunionists for Democrats, the slaveholding disunionists for Republicans). A party was the apparatus the people were urged to, in effect, join as a member by supporting. That membership entailed, among other things, accepting its constructions and committing oneself to the model of national unity that debates over Union mediated. It is not surprising, in this context, that the appeals were rarely narrowly jurisdictional or coldly public in their demands, for they did not call upon the people to adopt a rigorous program but rather asked the people to participate in the Union psychically.

In his study of how emotion fed the sectional conflict between North and South, the historian Michael E. Woods has isolated a shared code by which the various positions that made up the political debate on slavery were mediated; advocates on all sides "invoked the affective theory of the Union with passionate zeal."[3] Woods's observation that the affective theory of the Union was a common resource over which different groups had to compete suggests one way to approach a matter that has received much scholarly attention in American studies—what Peter Coviello has called an "affect-nation," "a far-reaching connectedness" as the basis for national unity.[4] In the light of Woods's study, the construct can be seen not only as a tradition shaping the national imaginary but also as a contested discourse, which various groups would struggle to shape in order to acquire the cultural right to frame national questions by their own lights. That right, indeed, was at stake in the rhetorical contest over Union in the decades leading up to the Civil War; and thus the small differences in the metaphoric system that developed as groups joined the shared code of affective response carry great

weight: they were the means by which each group tried to delegitimize or sanction positions that seemed to spring out of what might otherwise seem the uniform language of affect. With Republicans, there was the added stake of winning legitimacy for their own formation by breaking their enemies' monopoly on that language.

The discourse of Union demanded pseudopersonal feelings of affection to operate within the network of citizen, state, and nation. As Michael E. Woods puts it, "Ardent Unionists appealed to the [affective] theory to rekindle patriotic feelings of affection, fraternity, and love amid storms of sectional hatred." These figures would sacrifice their own section's interests "on the altar of emotional Unionism."[5] By the 1830s and continuing up to 1860, then, the tradition of viewing the Union as a voluntary fellowship bonded by love had become most closely associated with the Union-savers, those conservative Northerners who used their countrymen's loyalty to the Union as leverage for demanding concessions to the Slave Power in order to keep the slave states in the fold. This group belonged to no single faction within the Northern party system. Over the decade 1850–60, they were successively and concurrently Union Whigs,[6] conservative Know-Nothings, national Democrats, and Constitutional Unionists—but they shared a common reliance on the rhetoric not just of affect but specifically of affection.

This rhetoric of affection was part of a movement the critic Joseph Michael Sommers, in his study of Sarah Hale, has defined as "sentimental nationalism," which put a premium on what Hale called "feelings of kindly interest."[7] Partly based on a sense of common cause in the union of diverse states, individuals, and interests, these feelings rested on a perspective that the scholar Tobias Meneley, following Julie Ellison, finds within the relatively new model of bourgeois sympathy: "recognition that the other was enmeshed in the same social totality as oneself."[8] Such feelings, therefore, also implied a certain identification, understanding, and sympathy, but they differ in that regard from what scholars have unearthed in the language of affect as it developed in antislavery discourse and belief: whereas the feelings thought to be called up by others' enslavement often lent themselves to at least an indirect practical application,[9] the language of affection within the Union relied on an analogy between interpersonal feeling and patriotic commitment that was too theoretical to have any immediately obvious consequences, apart from what interested groups could encode into it. When compromise became

the dominant message that the language of affection transmitted after years of use, the rhetoric could then operate as an exclusionary system. Under its weight, every political agent subjected himself to a test; even a strictly pragmatic loyalty to the nation assumed the right underlying feelings, and those feelings could be measured only in the support for cross-sectional cooperation that sprang naturally out of them. The Union-savers lay exclusive claim to the right to apply this test, and their claim was widely accepted by the political culture.

In order for the critique of conservatives to extend beyond mere self-defense and to expand into a full world view, Republicans needed to harness their debunking of this rhetoric's purposes to their own version of a Union-binding affection. To the new party, the conservatives threatened to lead the people so far astray "that the very feelings that would, if well directed, result in patriotism are turned aside and become the power that drive the machinery built and set up by the vilest demagogues to crush out liberty from the land."[10] Republicans sought to redeem the affect-Union from this perversion, to define on new terms what a party campaign poem called "the chain of Love to bind / These states in union sweet."[11]

And, indeed, try as they might, the conservatives could not keep the language of affection their own private property when their antislavery opponents recognized how solid a barrier the Union-savers' desired monopoly placed before their own success. As the political scientist Rogan Kersh shows, Union rhetoric had, since colonial days, rested on a pivot between a sturdy consensus and "conceptual conflicts" over mastery of that rhetoric.[12] Indeed, the very stability of a rhetorical consensus at a given moment is what allowed dissenting voices to overthrow the practical implications of that consensus, precisely by means of accepting its abstract terms. This offered an opportunity for the Republican party, which faced the pressing need to affirm its nationality and hence to reverse the political culture's prohibition against its participation in the political arena.

While the struggle to define the Republican party as national, despite its virtual criminalization in much of the South, occurred on a variety of fronts from the year 1854 to 1860, appropriating the language of affection was at once a direct assault and a useful dodge. If successful, it would mitigate the aura that surrounded many of the party's more concrete policy positions as inimical to the interests of their fellow countrymen. By the 1850s, the stakes

couldn't have been higher: if the political antislavery movement could fully appropriate, for its own purposes, what had long been the rhetorical pretext for a national policy tolerating the growth of slavery's power, then a goal that had once been unthinkable—the movement's assuming a dominant position in the North—would lie within its reach. That project is an essential context for understanding the most famous work of the antebellum period to idolize the Union on the grounds of its magnetic affective force: Whitman's "Calamus." Given the rhetoric of affection's vagueness on actual policy, when "Calamus" is not recognized as part of a broader project to assume ownership over that rhetoric, the poem can appear a mere evasion of national disputes rather than a demand for a certain kind of national action.

Indeed, the critical tradition of examining the mediations on the Union found in "Calamus" shows the pitfalls of not viewing the poem within the Republican party's efforts to claim an essential rhetorical resource for itself. It has long been observed that the poem explicitly places the permanence of the Union on remarkably utopian grounds—the love between comrades. That approach to the Union, however, has at times been seen as affiliating the poem with the conservatives[13] or, more commonly, as revealing Whitman's determination to transcend a toxic national debate. David Reynolds, for instance, has recently contended that the fifth poem in "Calamus" makes "explicit [Whitman's] effort to replace failed political strategies with new, comradely ones."[14] According to this interpretation, Whitman was moving past the stale platitudes of national discourse to offer something transcendent and independent of the struggle for mastery over the nation's common tropes.

Useful antidotes to this widely held view include Jay Grossman's reminder that, in "Calamus," the celebration of manly love as the foundation of the Union is a "public proclamation" and by implication, therefore, not a personal solution to a political debate from which the poet feels alienated.[15] Scholars on the language of national affect, especially Michael Millner and Peter Coviello, have confirmed Grossman's emphasis by showing that Whitman to some degree relies on what Millner calls "the stock language" of national male friendship.[16] Coviello builds upon that groundwork by showing how Whitman manages to bend the tradition to his new aims and national vision. This approach, however, can also circle back to Reynolds's conclusion that Whitman seeks to engage quotidian political struggles only in order to transcend them. Thus, Coviello claims that Whitman was part of a broader

literary movement "to establish a conceptual ground, not territorialized by the state, on which the coherence of national citizenry might be imagined."[17] Now that "Calamus" has been rightly restored to one tradition of nation-binding white male affection, it needs also to be restored to the national debate that gave its participation in that tradition, at the particular moment of its first publication, so much weight.

Helpful in this regard is John Mac Kilgore's recent argument that Whitman had become more, not less, radical by 1860 and was beginning at the time of "Calamus" to affiliate his rhetoric with that of the disunionist abolitionists. Kilgore strikes a particularly useful blow at the anachronism that has long hampered placing Whitman's politics of Union in its true discursive context: treating the Civil War, triggered as it was by Southern secession, as the final ground of the disunion Whitman contemplated. To Kilgore, a true understanding of Whitman's investment in the question meets "the stumbling block of automatically associating secession—or disunion—with the Confederacy and the 'fractured state' of Whitman's crisis."[18] No matter how tiny the group of actual Northern disunionists was, the threat of disunion, even when coming from Southern firebrands, was most often laid at the door of free-state postures, and Kilgore's analysis usefully warns us against collapsing all such perceived threats, and the resulting rhetorical battle, into the one eventuality that shook the nation.

In the end, however, Kilgore arrives from the opposite direction at Reynolds's general conclusion: that Whitman is exempting himself from the terms in which Union-loving rhetoric was most often framed and targeted. To Kilgore, as to Reynolds, Whitman is standing outside the boundaries of the national party debate, affiliating, in Kilgore's view, his rhetoric with that of the disunionist abolitionists. Whitman "shatters juridical and national Unionism in the name of an extra-legal, affectionate form of Unionism claimed by enthusiasts for liberty and them alone."[19] The first third of this chapter will be devoted to showing how that affectionate form of Unionism, far from being "claimed by enthusiasts for liberty and them alone," was the common terrain on which the rhetorical contest between Union-savers and party antislavery was fought. The utopian features of the conservative affective Union alone can reveal the dimensions of the alternative offered by "Calamus." However charged with Whitman's own idiosyncratic approach, "Calamus" can best be understood as joining a counterdiscourse more widely produced by the

Republican party as it sought to appropriate the most powerful rhetorical weapon in the conservative arsenal. "Calamus" contributed to a broader revisionary struggle fought specifically within the domain of party discourse.

Unlike the party project, however, Whitman does not so much counter the Union-savers' prescriptions for national solidarity as reconfigure their imagined topography of the nation. Whitman draws anew the geographical lines that organize how the political energies that ferment in each individual American citizen will be sent out across the land. The cluster responds to the Union-savers by taking the premise that the nation should be imagined as a venue for the powers of a bonding affection so far that its implications begin to turn on their head. Whitman is not, in David Reynolds's terms, replacing political strategies with new comradely ones but drawing out the already prevalent metaphor of comradely affection so that he can manipulate it for new political purposes—beating the Union-savers at their own game. In this way, "Calamus" is Whitman's most significant contribution to a twenty-year cultural project, one soon to be triumphant, undertaken in the free states to remove the stigma that prevented the nation from taking measures repugnant to the slave interest. That stigma took nurture from the conservative ideal of geographic outreach, an ideal growing out of that group's imaginary construct of the Union and the most important context for understanding Whitman's intervention.

By 1860 antislavery Northerners had long concluded that, in the years around the Compromise of 1850, fear for the safety of the Union had become the barrier that stopped the natural expression of the North's principles and sentiments about the nation's relationship to slavery. The dominance of a Union-saving rhetoric in Northern conservative response to the crisis of those years came to be seen as a means of holding back the moral and political power of the free states. Assuming almost mythical status in the Republican version of the nation's political history was the way that, from 1846 to 1850, the majority of Northerners slid back from a firm opposition to the extension of slavery into the territories acquired from Mexico to a consensus that the South needed to be conciliated, lest her threats of disunion be carried out.[20] As Robert Cook shows particularly vividly in his study of the period's polit-

ical transformations in Iowa, what in 1848 had been considered mainstream Northern opinion—with many Whigs and Democrats trying to wrestle from the actual Free Soil party the mantle of the free soil principle—soon came to be seen as unpatriotic dissent from the terms by which the compromise measures of 1850 had saved the nation from ruin.[21] Antislavery Northerners feared that such capitulation would establish a pattern that bore directly on policy and scarcely required any renewed Southern threats. The very fact that a proslavery measure was "demanded by the slaveholders" would lead Northern conservatives to declare it "essential to the preservation of the Union," providing a further excuse to suppress antislavery agitation for positive measures, "under the garb of a holy devotion to the Union."[22] This dynamic inevitably brought its pressure to bear on how mainstream parties defined the Union itself.

Over the years, the conservative version of Northern duty began to offer indirect support for the Southern premise that the nation was founded in a compromise between the systems of free labor and slavery. The practical ramifications of this view would have had little currency in the North if they had not been backed by a metaphoric definition, according to which the Union itself seemed to entail them. According to this definition, the Union became an object carefully crafted by the fathers and delicately handled by their descendants, forever carrying within it similar obligations to the true heirs of the revolution. The description of the Union by an Ohio Democrat is representative: "this beautiful fabric reared by our forefathers, cemented by their blood, and bequeathed to us as a priceless inheritance."[23] By these lights, those who threaten the integrity of the Union even indirectly—primarily through antislavery agitation—become degenerate sons relinquishing a blessed legacy. The true patriot, according to the conservative Daniel Webster, will see the Union as a fixed form and, in architectural images well suited to Union-saving rhetoric, "will suffer no impairing of its foundation—no overthrow of its columns—no disorganization of its structure."[24]

The personal constraint that the political antislavery movement saw as an unbearable burden on each Northerner was, to conservatives, simply the natural corollary to the survival of the original structure. As a Pennsylvania Democratic county convention put it in 1850, "the obligation of this compact is so strong and personal, that no man has a right to excuse his infidelity to it, on the ground . . . that slavery wounds his conscience."[25] Those who shirk

this obligation are proving that the revolutionary fire no longer burns in their heart.[26] Each Northerner's personal loyalty must be tested according to whether he has properly subordinated any antislavery instincts to the interests of the nation. The failure to replicate the structural Union within one's internal system of responses was the most serious failure of citizenship. Conservatives thus demanded a particular nationalized mode of affective response as one of the duties of a patriot.

The claim that the safety of the Union rests not on a technical political arrangement but on what a speaker at a Union Safety meeting of 1850 called "a union of affection and kindly feeling"[27] (between sections and citizens) proscribed precisely what the political antislavery movement demanded: a rigorous application of Northern principles. What made this conservative supplement to constitutional arguments particularly seductive—and particularly relevant to Whitman's reappropriation of it—lies in how it promised utopian forms of national cohesion and solidarity and, at the same time, disguised the ideological constraint imposed on each Northerner for the sake of such cohesion as the exact opposite of constraint: an opening, a release from the narrow prejudices of locality, a very nationalization of the self. Daniel Webster, the Northerner most closely associated with the conservatives' shift, under the pressure of Southern threats, from a mild political antislavery to an entirely procompromise position, seemed to recognize that he was offering a substitute for what he now proscribed—the potential unleashing of long pent-up principles and sentiments in the expression of Northern resistance—in a Union that offered a compensatory bond that made the chains of constraint feel like nothing worse than the links of fellow feeling. The passage below followed up on the notorious March 1850 speech that, by condemning political antislavery and supporting the Fugitive Slave Law, made Webster the darling of conservatives.

> The Union for the preservation of which I strive . . . is not merely a union of law, of Constitution, of compact—but, while it is that, it is a union of brotherly regard, of fraternal feeling throughout the whole country. I do not wish that any portion of the people of this country shall feel held together only by the bonds of a legal corporation; bonds which some of them may think restrain their limbs,—cramp their affections,—gall and wound them. I wish, on the contrary, that they

> shall be bound together by those unseen, soft, easy-sitting chains that result from generous affections.[28]

According to this soothing prescription, any Northerner who chafes against the constraint on their antislavery principles imposed by loyalty to the Union can relax in the "soft, easy-sitting chains of affection." In that comfortable containment, differences of principle disappear. The generosity of the affections trumps whatever suppression is necessary to keep those feelings uppermost in one's constitution. This demand so had the ligatures of an idealized Union woven into it that merely questioning it cast doubt on a party's patriotism. Challenge it Republicans would, however, for lying within this utopian description of "the united love of a united government" was a critique of those who reject the easy restraint that attends generous affection; and this critique came to the fore particularly in the anti-Republican rhetoric that developed from 1854 to 1856.

When faced for the first time with a widely supported antislavery party, Northern conservatives called up the old charge that Northern resistance to slavery's demands was fundamentally un-American, not because of the content of its program but because of the personal degradations that permitted that program to bubble to the surface of national discourse. The conservative critique of political antislavery was highly personal, addressing the makeup of the individual as much as the survival of the republic; disease at the source would eventually scar the entire nation with its marks. Nor was this particular demonization of the Republicans incidental or subordinate to the conservatives' overall appeal: a full third of the planks in the New Jersey Democratic state platform, for instance, either called for "mutual forbearance, affection and regard" between Northern and Southern states or condemned the Republicans as "enemies to liberty" for failing to exercise those feelings.[29]

The kind of adjustment conservatives condemned agitators for failing to make was a corollary of the conservatives' view of the structural Union: a fixed arrangement of states, in which ideological diversity grew naturally out of geographical distance, demanded an affectionate and loyal reaching outward by citizens from one section to the other. According to conservatives, those who supported a strong stand against slavery's encroachments had refused to meet this demand by retreating both geographically and

psychically into a dangerous and narrow parochialism. The following conservative Know-Nothing attack on the Republican party illustrates how the Union-savers called for an American citizenry that could escape the prison of local prejudice and habit.

> The cultivation of a spirit of nationality is discouraged, and men are taught to withdraw their affections from the Nation and to concentrate them on the contracted sphere of their birth. . . . [This] must eventually give rise to an inextinguishable spirit of hatred between the opposite extremes of the Union, and will lead to an irreparable alienation of sympathetic feeling.[30]

According to this warning, the energy that should travel out across the nation recoils back on itself to feed local preconceptions. Again and again conservatives attributed national dissension to this same baleful spatial dynamic—one that is particularly relevant to "Calamus": the construction of loyalties and passions along "geographical lines" breeds "hatred" in "hearts once bound together by the strong ties of . . . affection."[31] It is as if the enclosure within the state were equivalent to enclosure within a brooding self-involvement that severs potential bonds with the outside world. Once left to replicate within these narrow borders, the baser and divisive passions are free to scorn any antidote to their endless festering, and as a result no route is left available for the redemptive passions to travel outward and bind the nation together.

As this withdrawal works out its baleful logic, an inward-turning fanaticism replaces patriotic fervor with a self-bred hostility, which colonizes and denationalizes each American space and thus reduces the Union to feuding islands of dissension, as in the following 1856 Democratic campaign poem:

> Each ominous presence stalks apart—each to the rest a foe—
> At a stern, distrustful distance,—for no comradeship they know,
> Save a common, urgent instinct to demolish and bring low.[32]

This breaking up of the nation into warring factions expresses at the national level an internal process for which Republicans must take responsibility. What begins in the constricted loyalties of the individual ends in the seizing up of the nation—with each group frozen in place peering fearfully out at their implacable enemies. According to this analysis, the new antislavery party formalized and perpetuated this process of interstate contamination

and thereby threatened to refound the nation on the basis of "implacable and inextinguishable hate."[33]

As one would expect, the political antislavery movement answered this critique not by dissenting from the view that affection undergirded the wide expanse of the Union but in reapplying the principle so that it no longer delegitimized their own program. Only a new image of the nation's space could reset the stage upon which the people were expected to express affection for the Union and their fellow countrymen. By the 1850s, that kind of reimagining had become a long-term project of the political antislavery movement. Thus, a Free Soil song of 1848 outdid the conservative call for an affectionate embrace:

> Our Southern friends are coming on—
> Fraternity's our motto;
> We welcome them with all our heart,
> As every freeman ought to.[34]

However extravagant and overcompensating such declarations appear, they point toward the task that the political antislavery movement set itself and that Whitman realized in a fully embodied form: to make conservative calls for affection seem tepid and limiting rather than exemplary. One feature of this recasting involved the representation of party itself as the force that had kept Americans at each other's throats: as the Northern Ohio Free Soilers put it, the "sincere and earnest friends of peace, liberty, and justice" that make up the majority of voters have long been "filled with distrust and bitter prejudices toward each other"—a breeding of national hatred in which party becomes a tool for the Slave Power's interests.[35] This appropriation of the conservative denunciation of "prejudice," a term most often used to condemn Northern suspicions of the South based on its social system, carries the promise that, upon the arrival of a true antislavery party, a national reconciliation could be achieved through a bonding more foundational than anything Union-savers could offer.

Eight years later, Republicans would pick up on this prophecy of dissension's end, one poem highlighting through quotation marks how it was appropriating the language of Union:

Then welcome the holy communion,
All petty dissensions above,
Which shows to the world a great "Union,"
Of Liberty, Justice, and Love.[36]

This surrogate Union of shared principle and feeling, of course, dodged the sectional divide upon which the conservative appeal rested. It could do that partly on the grounds of the belief, shared by Whitman and Republicans and examined from another angle in the first chapter, that the vast majority of Southern whites chafed under the command of the relatively few slaveholders and, given the right encouragement from the free states, would join their freedom-loving compatriots and rise up in a unifying national struggle against the oligarchy's power. This delusional belief, flying in the face of the slaveholders' cultural hegemony, which Whitman more rigorously examines in *The Eighteenth Presidency!*, undoubtedly bucked up the free-state political antislavery movement in its demands for resistance. But it also fell within a series of other forecasts that allowed Republicans to imagine away the bars to love across the sections. Both Whitman and party-antislavery needed to base their language of affection not strictly on present conditions but on their prophecy of a more ideal Union.

The feelings demanded of the people by the new Republican party began to encompass a vision of the Union not just as it stood but as it one day must be. While taking this broader temporal perspective, Republicans needed also to trump the conservative charge of localism and selfishness with a rhetoric of inclusiveness that left the conservatives seeming truly narrow and parochial. Thus, one explicit refutation of the charge that the Republican party was sectional and thus antinational claimed that the new party's followers lacked "even the element of self-love which belongs to the feeling of State pride." Instead their feeling is "one of friendship and fraternal amity," based on love of an American of the future, when "uncounted millions, worthy to be American citizens, should people this broad land."[37] In "Calamus" Whitman similarly takes over the conservative "Union of the hearts, as well as of the states,"[38] to make it serve a vision of the nation forming and reforming itself not on lines of present peace but on grounds compatible with a future continental realization.

Whitman borrowed the logic of the conservatives' rhetoric by rooting a nationalized self in the bonds of affection, without making that affection

depend on a structured organization of states. Recognizing this strategy is important, for, without it in view, some of the poetic tributes to the Union in *Leaves of Grass* might seem evidence of Whitman's partial complicity in the discourse of conservative Union-saving. In fact, those tributes show the poet's willingness to appropriate the terms of that discourse in order to reverse its implications. As critics have long recognized, the key poem in this context is the fifth poem of the "Calamus" cluster. Like the conservatives, the speaker begins the poem by demanding that a more organic force than legality must hold the Union together—and, for both the speaker and conservatives, that force is "affection." In Whitman's poem, however, that force binds deeper faculties together than it does for conservatives and replaces the Union-as-bequest with the Union-as-inspiration.

> There shall from me be a new friendship—It shall
> be called after my name,
> It shall circulate through The States, indifferent of
> place,
> It shall twist and intertwist them through and around
> each other—Compact shall they be, showing
> new signs,
> Affection shall solve every one of the problems of
> freedom,
> Those who love each other shall be invincible,
> They shall finally make America completely victo-
> rious, in my name. (1860, 349)

This is not far from the Republican "'Union' / Of Liberty, Justice, and Love" presented earlier. Like his party's formulations on this matter, Whitman's rhetoric here is both highly conventional and specifically tuned to the demands of party antislavery counterdiscourse. The traditional features come from relying on fraternal feeling for the continuing vitality of the principles of the Revolution:

> The dependence of Liberty shall be lovers,
> The continuance of Equality shall be comrades. (1860, 351)

Despite its affiliation with the language of quasi-sexual fusion in "Calamus," Whitman's formula here offers a narrative of historical solidarity that is un-

remarkable in its basic features. Republicans in particular, sensitive to the charge of being careless of the Union, took pains to show their own allegiance to this traditional celebration of inter-American love by taking up the conservatives' language of affection.

> The Northern heart beats warm and strong in its pulsations, with love and almost adoration for the great chain of Confederation which binds us, from the forests of Maine, to the golden state of California in one great band of sister States.[39]

The innovation of "Calamus" lies not in this position but in its diagnosis of how this love works its way through the nation.

"Calamus" offers no spatial medium along which the affection may travel —at least none that functions independently of that affection. In this way, Whitman loosens the conservatives' "binding obligation" by opening the circuit through which national affection can pass from one group of citizens to the next. The Union-savers' "voluntary ligatures woven by affection, community of interest, and mutual love"[40] become, in "Calamus," an involuntary impulse that binds no one to present arrangements but promises to recruit all to a task not defined by borders. Indifferent to place, the poem breaks the bonds of obligation to compromise; the poem's geography has already made "the continent indissoluble" by the inspiration of a friendship that twists and intertwists the states "through and around each other," breaking down their several identities and hinging their vitality on their interrelation. As Jay Grossman points out, the comrades are linked "across (and against) all manner of regional and political barriers."[41] The imaginary lines are broken down not by subjects of the Union but by the original energy of the nation's making.

In the process, the conservatives' narrative of reaching outward from locality to nation in devotion to an affection-driven compromise begins to appear mechanical and contractive. Indeed, when conservatives imagined the bonds of affection breaking through state borders, they saw it as a reproduction in the present of the founding's original mechanisms. Thus, the former vice president George Dallas, in his horrified reaction to the political chaos wrought by the fall 1854 congressional elections, reminded Americans that the Union produced "our quick, almost instinctive sympathies, in joy and sorrow, with the most distant fellow citizens" and will then go on to be sustained by that same force. One result of the original Union's holdover

power is that, by the momentum of its original creation, it will "organize a power of simultaneous action" against fanaticism.[42]

The resurrection of a founding energy runs on different principles in "Calamus." His comrades perform not at the command of a preexisting original Union, as in Dallas's redemption narrative, but by reformulating the Union at its true origins, before it produced any of its secondary fruits. The "old breath of life, ever new" (349) that the speaker bestows on his nation in Calamus 5 is of a past that has left no regulatory structures to guide it in its life path. Through the agency of this breath, at once originary and vital, a recaptured historical power overrides the traces of history as much as the delineations of geography.

Under this new force, the individual citizen is no longer required to feel in order to participate fully in a preestablished American compact, whose intent is to nationalize the self. Nationality itself springs out of the affection that creates its own compact. In the fifth poem, the comrades and the lovers

> shall tie and band stronger than hoops of iron,
> I, extatic, O partners! O lands! henceforth with the
> love of lovers tie you. (1860, 351)

As when he claims that the dynamism of the lovers will "take permanent shape and will through The States" (343), the speaker here so completely reverses the paradigm of national loyalty that the states lose their power as political actors unless they express and channel an energy that must precede them. Whitman makes the "purport of these States" (374) to organize the very energies that will make the political demarcations themselves an engine of productive manly love. And the kind of affection that the poem at once describes and invokes, however vividly new the speaker claims it to be, derives from a long-standing dispute in national political discourse as to what kind of feelings should properly bind the Union together.

Contrasting Whitman's celebrations with their Union-saving alternative brings to the surface the sociopsychological nature of the debate into which "Calamus" enters. The political dispute over the extent of the North's obligations to appease the slave interest in order to protect the Union took the

form of a rhetorical contest over the nature and function of the affection that devotion to the Union required. The "love of lovers" that runs throughout "Calamus" rebukes the anodyne domestic language of the Union-savers—their insistence on a fostering bond that reflects the original familial unity of the founders. The Democrat D. S. Dickinson, for instance, put forward the analogy of the marriage tie to imply an obligation to transfer the affectionate bond between the founders into a system of care and protection from state to state. "Our Fathers were locked in each other's arms," and the same model of affectionate interdependence should proscribe distinct and self-involved Northern demands.[43] This rhetoric of family unity was easily recruited in representations that softened but also affirmed the structural Union, as in Reverend Cummings's following metaphor: "We must love our Southern brethren, and they us; and arrange our family difficulties as brethren should. This republic is a harp, of which the federal compact is the golden frame, and the sovereign states are the chords of silver, joined harmoniously together."[44] In keeping with the cliché of "the music of the union," this construction reduces slavery to a family difficulty, whose main evil is the disruption of harmony. The Union, New Jersey Democrats declared, "can only endure by cherishing those patriotic and holy emotions which bind members of the same family together."[45] The model of family peace meant acceding to slavery's demands.

The speaker of "Calamus" rejects that model in a language of defiant self-assertion, which credits his own act of describing the new principle of a masculine founding with the original power of that force itself. More specifically, he taps a political antislavery strategy through which the Union-savers were challenged on their own ground—a strategy that rejected the conservatives' connecting and constraining affection in favor of a productive and progressive one. Thus, one of the major organs of antislavery dissent from the compromise measures of 1850, the *Boston Atlas*, appropriated the language of fraternal solidarity (note the words in upper case) to refute the conclusions of the very politicians who had made that language so familiar in their case for conciliating slavery: "But, after all, permanent PEACE, real UNION, and true BROTHERHOOD, have their basis upon the rock of justice, and receive their life and beauty from the warm gushing affections of the manly heart."[46] Although without the same cues of a rhetorical countermove, Whitman himself had made such an appeal to the bonds of masculine emotion

when he justified the burgeoning Democratic Free Soil dissension from party orthodoxy in 1847: "We carry with us every sympathy which is honest and manly, and that comes from warm hearts."[47] "Calamus" picks up where this conclusion leaves off by identifying those warm gushing affections not just as the vivifying source but as the very stuff of union—its "shape and . . . will."

The sexual charge Whitman gives to the energy binding his comrades together releases the representations from the domestic analogy, with all its implications of stable protection. In his crisis, the speaker feels no protection and sees his only hope in employing "the subtle electric fire" (377) that musters together his instincts with those of his comrades. In the context of the debate over whether the nation could act against slavery, what Coviello calls the "affective depth" in "Calamus" with regard to "relations between strangers"[48] helps, among other things, to reverse the shift traced by the historian George Forgie. As Forgie describes it, the masculine rhetoric of expansion of "Young America" in the 1840s gave way to a language of family sentimentality under which even such a Democratic firebrand as Stephen Douglas had eventually to buckle.[49] "Calamus" returns the sentimental Union of Forgie's analysis to the previous decade's image of a nation expanding on the strength of its founding impulses.

Releasing the Union from the institutional structures by which conservatives meant to define it thus makes way, in "Calamus," for the call for a masculine energy of disenthrallment. In a vain attempt to employ the same tactic, the Union-savers at times called on young men to redirect their "generous and enthusiastic impulses" away from the passions of antislavery to the task of preserving the Union.[50] These perfunctory calls, however, seemed to relegate those impulses to a political realm in which they would be circumscribed and monitored. Even as they attempted to claim this passionate commitment for themselves, the Union-savers could not disguise that they were calling for a tighter restriction on the deployment of a citizen's energy than were their Northern opponents. The political antislavery movement thus had one advantage to offset the many disadvantages it faced in its involvement in the rhetoric of affectionate patriotism.

In its very excess, "Calamus" runs with this advantage. The cluster's tone of passionate and unrestrainable feeling in and of itself highlights by contrast the constraining and constrained rhetoric visible in even the most exuberant Union-saving representations. As they promoted national peace, these

representations tended to replicate in their own performance their demand for an end to "this wild turmoil so base and impure."[51] Not all Union-saving poetry struck a tone as consistent with its call for restraint and suppression as the following example, but that feature was common enough for "Calamus" to allow its own performance to emphasize the difference:

Hush! Hush! ye noisy demagogues,
    Ye agitators frantic,
Be quiet all, from North to South,
    From sunset to Atlantic. . . .
'Tis time that prejudice was done,
    Our bitterness and spite too;
Let's greet all with that courtesy
    Which each one has a right to.[52]

Relevant here, certainly, is Kilgore's analysis of various literary figures' embrace of enthusiasm, and this party critique has its origins in the proscription against abolitionist discourse, whose later iterations Kilgore links to Whitman's project in 1860. The conservatives, however, aimed to suppress not so much enthusiasm as disorderly expressions that broke the chain of love on which interstate comity relied.

Whitman's unseemly celebrations offer an implicit rebuke to these calls for a composed courtesy. Moreover, they expose those calls as circumscribing the very "affection" that the Union-savers claimed to demand as the salvation to the Union's woes. Most significantly of all, however, "Calamus" ascribes to the nation's geographic expanse a power quite distinct from the distant formal recognition called for in this Union-saving poem. The union of affection that Whitman demands will arouse, not hush, the people's passions and will carry them over wide swaths of space, offering what Coviello has called "a kind of binding intimacy extended across a far-flung citizenry."[53]

Like his party, "Calamus" aggressively claims for itself the right to declare a self-shaping love that, as another Republican put it, "is not bounded by any internal lines of partition."[54] The cluster thus contributes to a broader cultural project of appropriating the language of affection from the conservatives so that it can carry within it a new system of differentiation—loosening the constraints by which the political culture forbade certain kinds of collective action and permitted others. The right of the people, including the people of

the North, to determine the governance of the nation was ultimately what was at stake in how the language of love was recoded. America shall become "invincible" not simply, as traditionally conceived, by relying on the palladium of the Union's safety but also by making the Union the agent of free political action. As it moves beyond the programmatic fifth poem, "Calamus" takes its stand on the ground of this belief.

When Northern conservatives unabashedly celebrated the unbreakable nexus between "urging union [and] harmony" on the one hand "and concession" to slavery on the other, the political antislavery movement needed a way to sever the associative link that through repetition had taken on the taste of inevitability.[55] A buried opportunity lay here: if the conservative view always entailed capitulation in its very formulation, then a realigned vision of the Union, even before any mission was assigned it, could already entail defiance. The history of discursive maneuvers in this area offered "Calamus" that fund of implication.

The question raised by the contrasting representations of Union was clear: was the citizen's duty action on behalf of liberty or restraint on behalf of national peace? Conservatives quite explicitly took both the love of Union and the affection underlying it as a built-in harness on political antislavery action: "There is a conservative power—a love of *union* at the bottom of all political action—which curbs and will ever curb fanaticism."[56] When the political antislavery movement sought to make its own victories the key to a true nationality, they needed to credit both the Union and the "love of union" underlying it with the power to spur on action—to redefine this "conservative power" as a force that will conserve the nation's principles only through an active requickening of their performance in history. "The cry of 'the Union,' instead of deterring us from action, should incite us on."[57] "Calamus" contributes to this reversal of Union-saving proscription by imagining action as the tangible sign of the connection between men. Action becomes the medium through which the efficacy of the original bond between citizens could be tested. "Calamus" fleshes out this model of national performance by imagining it as the organic expression of the cohesive force whose power of motion it has already discovered.

To this end, "Calamus" affirms that comradeship can occur only if the people grow determined to supplant the power of the establishment. This affirmation culminates in poem 25, and earlier poems establish the premises on which that affirmation rests. One of those premises is that the speaker is both an exemplar and a conduit for a new relationship with the nation's institutions. In poem 19 the affection-bound speaker takes on that dual role to describe an independence that he can now formulate as a challenge to his lovers:

> Mind you the timid models of the rest, the
> majority?
> Long I minded them, but hence I will not—for I
> have adopted models for myself, and now offer
> them to the Lands. (1860, 364)

These models eventually become the new "institution of the dear love of comrades" that quite explicitly replaces the land's existing institutions in Calamus 24 (368). The speaker's act of establishing these institutions—independently of what preceded them—in every city "inland and seaboard" reconceptualizes the very principle of an institution. It ceases to connote the fixed and established practices passed on generationally, with more authority and organizational integrity than a mere tradition. The speaker's new institution is homogenous and universal and indistinguishable from the power that fuels it. As he does with the labor poems examined in the second chapter, Whitman unites means and ends as he recasts the patrimony of the past: it no longer merely sends down through time dead forms to control and regulate. Under Whitman's genealogical system, it makes new demands.

The speaker himself declines merely to offer a behest conjured up by his utterance: Calamus 24 sets up Calamus 25, even as it heralds a shift in tone from generous founding to stern compunction. In his demands, the speaker supplants the regulatory discursive system that made, in conservative formulations, the Union as it preexists at once the outer limit and inner impulse of patriotic action. In Calamus 25 the speaker does not pose new restrictions or imperatives but rather creates the people out of the demand he makes on the land itself:

The prairie-grass dividing—its own odor breathing,
I demand of it the spiritual corresponding,
Demand the most copious and close companionship
of men (1860, 368)

So generated, the comrades will eschew preordained modes of action and take on a new gait simply by virtue of their genesis and their thriving in the ecosystem of companionship. The speaker continues his demands:

Demand the blades to rise of words, acts, beings,
Those of the open atmosphere, coarse, sunlit, fresh,
nutritious,
Those that go their own gait, erect, stepping with
freedom and command—leading, not following,
Those with a never-quell'd audacity—those with
sweet and lusty flesh, clear of taint, choice and
chary of its love-power. (1860, 368)

In these passages we see Whitman take further the universalization of the thronging trope examined in the previous chapter. Demanding a "spiritual corresponding" from the land echoes the thronging trope's assumption that the land will join a communicative network once it is tickled back into life by the people's issuing out of their segregated spaces. Despite this echo, in Calamus 25 the land is not awoken into its role as restorer by a common purpose and initiative; rather, the people must, prior to any such designation of roles, erect their companionship "spiritually corresponding" to the land, leaving not even the degree of division between voice and medium evident in the thronging trope. The blades themselves "rise of" the group's being and utterances themselves. The various stages still evident in "Poem of the Road" collapse in an exploding synthesis expressing the nation's essence in space and voice simultaneously. Only with that pure correspondence completed does Whitman isolate the new Americans as separate agents moving across the land to usurp authority.

In his specific representations here, Whitman joins his party's metaphorical project to recast the Union as an institution rescued by the new injection of freedom given it by the West. One campaign poem in this vein, at once mocking and accepting the conservative premise that the Union

was "sick," offered the remedy not of tighter bounds but of an unloosening into freedom:

> But the Union needed free air . . .
> It needed free soil to grow,
> And the FREE-MOUNTAIN air . . .
> Soon caused it to blossom and blow![58]

Here, as in "Calamus," the Union itself comes to depend on the liberty-charged land that will give it reach and growth. "Calamus" carries forward that project of finding the Union's mechanism for survival within a new open field for freedom.

This new American takes his life-force directly from the land that had founded the initial companionship, rather than from the history of that companionship. "Stepping with freedom and command" is an effect of this organic continuity with their true origins. Here Whitman replaces the myths of the Union's origins that, according to conservatives, were themselves so fundamental and nation-defining that the present generation must, in the words of George Dallas, "keep rigidly to [the Union's] terms" by avoiding "transitory excitements."[59] Whitman confers new dignity on the present moment by making it more than a vehicle for fealty to a temporally distant founding; the peoples' "never quell'd audacity" expresses the life of an ever-blooming Union that is one with the life of the lands themselves. There is no force outside of itself to which it can properly conform. The companionship itself can arise only from the fierce acts of independence of its individual members. Thus, the bonds between the founders become a memory to be envied as perhaps unretrievable in Calamus 27, not a model for a pale imitation. Even the cross-generational obedience examined in this study's third chapter lies outside the realm of an instant realization of a new union.

Hence, in the next lines of poem 25 Whitman returns to the assertion found throughout *Leaves of Grass* that true self-ownership precludes political obedience. In the new myth of origin, the people, having emerged out of the land into their companionship, could scarcely be expected to recognize rulers as anything more than those outside their new circle of free movement:

> Those that look carelessly in the faces of Presidents
> and Governors, as to say, *Who are you?*

Those of earth-born passion, simple, never constrained,
never obedient,
Those of inland America. (1860, 368)

In their very simplicity, the people cannot acknowledge nominal leaders as the source of the Union's power. Instinctively, then, they sidestep obedience and become the protectors of a self-contained, self-sustaining, but also future-projecting nation immune to any internal divisions. Taking command of the Union becomes as natural as "go[ing] their own gait." The proscriptions of the conservatives, what is defined in one of the cluster's previous poems as "edifices, or rules, or trustees" (368), dissipate into the air as America's primitives act out their own impulses and take up their collective inheritance unaided. As a result, a new distinction conquers the old conservative distinction between the Union lovers and the dividers: the rulers themselves fall outside the circle of the new nation-binding love and thus become the Union's new enemy.

The piece introducing the 1860 edition, "Proto-Leaf," reveals what the genealogy of "Calamus" allows the speaker to arrogate to himself. "Proto-Leaf" bears the fruit of appropriations that are at the heart of the "Calamus" project —to wed Union-saving not to compromise but to defiance.

And I will make a song of the organic bargains of
These States—And a shrill song of curses on
him who would dissever the Union;
And I will make a song for the ears of the President,
full of weapons with menacing points,
And behind the weapons countless dissatisfied faces. (1860, 10)

The first three lines of this passage could have been lifted from the conservative phrase book, so standard is their warning. That Whitman can ally them with the subsequent antislavery call for the people to reconquer their power exemplifies the rhetorical work Whitman's party was performing. Within the confines of the 1860 *Leaves of Grass*, however, the transition achieved in this early passage, from standard proscription to political assertion, awaits and relies on the logic of Union laid out in "Calamus." Whitman goes to the root of that mutual implication between Union and freedom's power upon which his party's interventions rested but to which the party itself rarely gave a full narrative embodiment.

The "close companionship" passage in Calamus 25 draws a line of continuity between individual arising and collective action that runs on a different narrative track than the thronging trope Whitman repurposes for "Poem of the Road." Whereas, in thronging, the coming together is a result of private recognition that staying in place has jeopardized the republic—requiring a new path for republican action in the shared space of fresh initiative—in Calamus 25 the speaker's demands set the conditions for membership so as to impose a bond between those already defiant. The speaker wills the union, and in doing so breaks the nexus between "supineness and division,"[60] whose dynamics his party identified as the true source of national dissipation. The speaker's own demand, then, replaces the new reevaluation that triggers the nonchalant refusal to recognize the president, which was examined in the labor poems in the second chapter. His recruiting becomes inseparable from his placing of the comrades—his nestling them safely within the confines of "inland America," where they are exempt from the centralized network of mediations Whitman condemns in *The Eighteenth Presidency!*. Conjoined with each other on the grounds of their defiance, each citizen can move out from that utopian space without the danger of entering those networks psychically or socially.

Like the Union-savers, party antislavery held up an ideal of specifically Union-incited action, which needed to stand independent of, and uncorrupted by, the implications it held for national policy, precisely so those implications could then be seen as springing organically, without special pleading, from the ideal itself. The cult of spontaneous collective action, which we have seen Whitman join in the labor poems and in "Poem of the Road," was therefore similarly appropriated by conservatives. Conservatives smoothed over any resulting incongruity and compensated for their disadvantages by forging a direct link between feeling and action, the clearly laid out path from sympathy for one's countrymen toward resistance to antislavery aggression—the dragon to be slain in a joint struggle whose success will reaffirm the very fragile object it seeks to protect. Whitman draws a different line between the common bond and the Union's safety.

Calamus 34 imagines "a new City of Friends" to establish the model for action it has already adumbrated in the earlier poems. While detailing this purely utopian project, the poem begins by gesturing toward the standard real-life rationale for the sacrifices and accommodations that the Union

demands—that once national unity rested on unassailable grounds, the new nation was safe from the threats offered by a hostile world: "I dreamed in a dream, I saw a city invincible to the attacks of the whole of the rest of the earth." Typically in celebrations of the Union, this safety from assault appears as the prize for the fine intricacies of mutual accommodation that went into the Union; love is the original impetus and the protecting agent of this arrangement. In his truncated version, intent on avoiding implicating this standard narrative in the necessity of concession Union-savers attached to it, Whitman makes the love itself the principal gird to the new "city of friends": "Nothing was greater there than the quality of robust love—it led the rest." This "robust love" then is manifest not in the peace and comity promised by the Union-savers but in the power to act that was harbored by each member: "It was seen every hour in the actions of the men of that city / And in all their looks and words" (373). Whitman thus refuses to make the affection a tool toward a safe structure that will reflect its origins; rather, that affection becomes the essence that shines forth moment by moment as the comrades enact the Union in their own lives. The looks, words, and actions offer protection only insofar as they are the common visible expression of what must continually feed the new city. Only with this principle established can "Calamus" go on, in the next poem, Calamus 35, to distinguish between different regions in his address to various Americans, culminating in "to the Southerner I love" (374). Here he universalizes even as he microtargets what was the uniform sign in the ideal city. To do full justice to what Calamus 35 claims, however, one must first consider what the speaker's sweeping journey over the nation has accomplished. This project of dispersing a primal American self over the inland reverses the Union-savers' vision of a malevolent contagion. In the conservatives' most extreme warnings, the benighted citizen nurses his parochial and selfish hatreds until they burst out across state lines and over the nation's geographical expanse, scarring its landscape and threatening its integrity. The extension of untempered passions, according to the Union-savers, flouted the requirement that each individual regulate himself to the broader demands of the nation as a confederacy. The responsible citizen, on the other hand, overcomes his local prejudices and, in the process of that purifying triumph over his own weaknesses, comes out a new kind of participant in the body politic. Whitman insists that any such limit placed on "earth-born passion" (368) amounts to a betrayal of

nationality disguised as a salutary regimen of nation-building from within. The Transcendentalist subject can, paradoxically, reveal his alignment with the nation's energies only by maintaining his independence from the majority.

This calm and generous offering to "the Lands" of the internally devised models could not be further removed from the mob mentality conservatives saw in any national principles that did not reflect, in their very formulation, the compromises built into the constitution. In Calamus 30 the speaker takes as a gift the "robust American love" (371) that he knows belongs among these new people. When the speaker, having ruled out the threat of dissension in advance, becomes a pilot and commander in poem 31, the stage is set for America, in poem 34, to become "invincible" by dint of the "robust love" that "can be seen every hour in [the men's] actions" (373). The republic's safety is here placed on grounds exactly the opposite of the Union-savers: navigation through and toward manly action.

"Calamus," therefore, reinvents the affection binding the citizens of the Union together not only to neutralize the condemnations of the Union-savers but also to rehabilitate the collective action of the people in the face of the institutional and traditional proscriptions that meant to incapacitate them in advance. Republicans believed that the expanse of the Union should no longer be sought solely in the nation's geography; instead it is found primarily within a free-state collectivity, which has finally achieved from within a national potential that the Union-savers could imagine resulting only from an affectionate reaching outside the self. In this context, the ongoing references to every part of the country in "Calamus" should not be seen as complicit in Union-saving prescriptions. Rather, that geographic inclusiveness was the only way to offer a compelling, or even acceptable, answer to Union-saving demands. In presenting this answer, it joined an already flourishing rhetorical strategy of appropriating Union-saving bromides to serve the interests of political antislavery.

While justifying his break from the bisectional Know-Nothing party in a process that would eventually lead him, along with so many of his fellow bolters, into the Republican party, the politician Henry Wilson invoked a Union-saving formula so as to reconcile its premises with the political antislavery position—that the North must become an acting subject in history:

> We hear a great deal said about no North, no South, no East, no West,—I trust, sir, we have found the North at last, and that we are large enough, that our hearts are large enough, to embrace in our affections the whole country—including the South.[61]

Here the demands of the structural Union give way to the kinds of demands Whitman makes in his poem; the individual who devotes himself to comprising with others a national subject recognizes that, when pooled with the growth of others, his individual growth has included the nation's entire expanse. In a complete reversal of the Union-saving view of interstate comity, a citizen is stretched into national proportions by keeping true in the first instance to the principles animating the nation. Defiance, in this case, becomes the source, not the enemy, of his affective reach. Becoming true to his own principles has unleashed the full power of his affections. Whitman joins this political project of rewriting the demands placed by the nation's geographical diversity within the self so that each citizen will discover in his own disenthrallment that he has embraced the entire country.

All of "Calamus" affirms, as did Wilson, that "we are large enough" for a truly national project. This comes out most clearly in poem 35, where the speaker claims for his own constitution each region of the nation—without recourse to Union-saving tolerant outreach:

> To you of New England,
> . . . . . .
> to the Southerner I
> love,
> These, with perfect trust, to depict you as myself—
> the germs are in all men;
> I believe the main purport of These States is to found
> a superb friendship, exalté, previously unknown,
> Because I perceive it waits, and has been always waiting, latent in all men. (1860, 374)

The speaker here takes upon himself the same responsibility that Wilson demands of the people: to allow identification to grow eventually into embodiment. It is ambiguous whether that process issues from or results in the "superb friendship" that becomes the "main purport of these States." In

either case, the states themselves allow the distinctions they breed to break down. They magnify and formalize sectional differences that they then make nugatory. Without the boundaries that first define them, the love would be unnecessary as the nation would simply rely on its own uniformity; without the crossing of those boundaries, the nation would have to resort to an alienating tolerance that assumed otherness. Before laying out the implied next step of concerted action, "Calamus" moves that bonding force inward—to the internal mechanisms of each individual who is party to it.

The self that has realized his latent powers justifies the geographic and sectional differences that remain by making them an outward reflection of his own diversity. What conservatives represent as the binding ligaments of a diverse but united nation have been transformed into faculties and capacities operating both within the individual and collectively. Here Whitman goes beyond even Henry Wilson's claim that "we are large enough" to embrace the South. The poem redeems action as the sole means of realizing the true purport of the states. On those grounds alone such action should be celebrated, and the practical question of whether it will breed immediate divisions loses its relevance. That redemptive process shows up the limitations of Union-saving tolerance precisely by accepting its aims and judging the mechanisms by which it promises to realize those aims as counterproductive.

What, in the final analysis, the political antislavery movement sought to expose was Daniel Webster's sleight of hand that normalized the constraint of Northern action as the "easy sitting chains that result from generous affections." All of "Calamus" reverses this paradigm. The "generous affections" demanded by "Calamus" depend on an unloosening, a breaking out that is entirely at odds with the conservative vision of tolerant and loving self-restraint. In poem 36 the "something fierce and terrible" (374) that is ready to burst forth between the speaker and the athlete he addresses is ambiguously violent and sexual. Its disruptive force recasts the people's obligation as projecting their interpersonal energies into the future. Whitman thus joins his party in replacing a fixed structure that requires the nation's protection with a future principle of growth, whose operation depends on, in the words of the Republican polemic quoted earlier, the "uncounted millions" who are "worthy to be American citizens." The people in the present moment need to keep that chain of transmission alive by proving they are so worthy: they must establish a charter under which affection and unboundedness will remain inseparable.

The mid-nineteenth-century political imagination had a habit of searching for various kinds of union at the root of the Union of states. The language by which the bonds between citizens were described easily bled into celebrations of the national compact, and vice versa. "Calamus" owes its own strange transitions to this slippage so common in political discourse. As the following typical Republican polemic reveals, the new party took advantage of this tradition of discovering more fundamental powers of cohesion operating underneath the political Union in order to redirect the language of union to their own program of defiance.

> What is our National Union, but a nation of individuals? Nor is it a union of force, but a union of attraction, of affinity. Such being the case, is it not necessarily governed by the same laws that govern all other unions? Then it will be lasting just as the principles that unite are lasting in the hearts and minds of those who compose the union. Pervert the minds and corrupt the hearts of the people, by inculcating obedience to what is evil in itself, and it will be utterly impossible to preserve and maintain the union, for the very obvious reason, that not union but only antagonism and strife can proceed from such a growth on the part of the people.[62]

Here peace is restored in the rejection of obedience: that prophecy reverses the terms of the Union-saving test, where the authenticity of internal individual responses is proven only through their fruits of cross-sectional peace. What was finally at stake, then, in how citizens saw their relationship to the Union was the specific kind of "growth on the part of the people" that the relationship implied. According to the antislavery movement, practices and languages aimed at protecting the Union could defeat their own ostensible purpose by frustrating both personal development and the capacity of people to fuse into one. Thus, in Calamus 27, after the triumphant rejection of trustees in the previous two poems, the speaker marks the death of his older self "while I stride ahead, material, visible, imperious as ever" (369). His resolve "to disengage myself from these corpses of me" (370) illuminates what was at stake in the affective union he had just affirmed: the ongoing

sovereignty of the individual, a figure for the people's sovereignty, which cannot survive with a rigid conformity to the present. Passing on, leaving the corpses behind, is the only means of survival.

The Union worked against its long-term survival if it tapped forces in the individual that would then make true national adhesion impossible. In the Republican passage on the "union of attraction," the conservative prophecy of chaotic dissension is turned on its head: if the people grow into compliance, they must also grow into dissension. "Calamus" makes the same claim by representing political obedience as a function of an inert and inorganic relation between citizens, which can never extend its reach outward to bind the nation together. By insisting on an organic "union of attraction" that will be both the fruit and vehicle of the Union, "Calamus" demands a turn from obedience toward a kind of political action that is self-propelled and independent of any imperatives but its own flow of energy. It thus, like the Republican passage, takes full rhetorical advantage of the fact that the Union was "governed by the same laws that governed all other unions." There is another way, however, in which "Calamus" participates in the same rhetorical strategies as this jeremiad against corrupting conservatism.

Obedience is the target of the "union of attraction" passage at the level of its construction as well as at the level of its content, for it does not appear in a rhetorical vacuum as a pronouncement of a principle separable from the self-legitimization involved in its own formulation. Like most Republican discourse on this matter, it can be understood only as an aggressive countermaneuver against the immobilizing charge that the political antislavery movement endangered the Union's perpetuity—a countermaneuver whose final goal is to take back from the conservatives the rhetoric of Union by including within its scope a more dynamic understanding of the nation's history. And as is also the case with Henry Wilson's appropriation of the conservative "know no North, no South" refrain, the legitimization through reformulation itself exercises the new power that the reformulation celebrates. This same doubling effect is evident in "Calamus." The speaker's very affirmation of the new, procreative love that will bind the nation together becomes the clearest example of the refusal to obey that he prescribes. Republicans quite explicitly set themselves this task of illustrating the reversal of doughface constraint in their own counterdiscourse. Only once the Union-savers have been deprived of their strategy of making each freeman's "love of country a means of subjecting

him to their power"[63] can that love be redeployed for the purpose of national redemption. With this same aim, "Calamus" demands that the people assume agency as a natural stage in the development of a new discourse.

The speaker models this process in a way that parallels his displacing of states as landmarks of commitment. To ground his call for a new version of participation, Whitman makes his speaker the prophetic channel of the power he names, the one who can give a form in language to the power that will cross over state lines. Early poems of "Calamus" prepare him for this arrogation, especially the second poem, where he shuns the official discourse of comity and Union as a way of dedicating himself to his new vision.

> I will sound myself and comrades only—I will never
> again utter a call, only their call,
> I will raise, with it, immortal reverberations through
> The States,
> I will give an example to lovers, to take permanent
> shape and will through The States. (1860, 343)

The speaker here makes his own defiant assertion the agent of unity; those assertions can no longer be considered threatening when they come to be seen as the vehicle through which the original energy of the nation will be circulated. This vivification through the speaker's breath cuts out the mediating role of obligations inherited from an ancestral bond. Naming his own prophetic voice as the mediating agent of an already existing power reverses the chain of command in the Union-saving paradigm and strips of its authority the discourse that emerges from that structure.

While "Calamus," therefore, declares an end to an imitative discourse that would only reinforce the conservative premises it sought to challenge, it does so without needing to gloat over its newfound self-justification. Indeed, it celebrates its freedom from that obligation as part of its confident discovery of a new superseding authority for its own proclamations. Whitman did not always make this choice; he often pointed toward the self-defensive posture that he will not stoop to display in "Calamus." In one particularly significant example, "Poem of the Daily Work," analyzed in the second chapter, calls for the love of the nation's institutions to rest on a love for the people, while slyly insinuating that the reader will mistakenly first take that call as a gesture of concession:

We thought our Union grand, and our Constitution
grand,
I do not say they are not grand and good, for they
are,
I am this day just as much in love with them as
you,
Then I am eternally in love with you, and with
all my fellows upon the earth. (1856, 128)

The love for the individual, who carries within himself the impulse at the source of the nation's founding, protects Union-devotion from the danger of slipping into either the degrading habits of self-abnegation, promoted by conservative Union-saving, or into an isolating self-satisfaction at one's own position in the nation. In this way, Whitman trumps the love-promoting Union-savers by implying that their love is devoid of a true object but is merely an extension of a narrow, if ostensibly patriotic, turning inward. A kind of pun in Whitman's grammatical construction disables this Union-saving idolatry by confusing the subject-object relation upon which true devotion to the Union must rest. "As much in love with them as you" first seems to convey "as much in love with them as you are." Though that continues to be the line's primary meaning, the passage shifts from such defensive patriotic badge-wearing toward the celebration of love as the Union's binding force; and after the final line, it also begins to mean "as much in love with them as with you." The change from "But" at the beginning of the fourth line in the 1855 edition to "Then" in 1856 helps foster the productive conflation of meanings. By making the object of Union-devotion also its subject, this stanza hinges each kind of love on the other, and competition over loyalty to the Union dissolves in an eternally renewable identification. (Significantly, in this context, the 1860 edition omits "eternally" and hence the contrast with "this day" [149]).

The shift in this passage, however, also offers some subtle mockery to the obligatory claim that it seems at first to echo, as if it were challenging the assumptions that make the obeisance he points towards necessary. "Calamus," on the other hand, barricades its performance against such gestures of acknowledgment or satire. This change in tone is dictated by the content of the cluster's affirmations: the speaker is not just the lover but the prophet

of a love that he can command precisely because it comes out independently of him or of the Union, whose internal boundaries it destabilizes. This role demands an end to the self-defensive postures by which the nation had cooperated in prostituting the idea of Union to a conservative agenda. The very refusal of "Calamus" to sound the usual cues of a rhetorical contest betrays a confidence that itself has implications for that contest. "Calamus," in other words, represents a later stage of development than "Poem of the Daily Work" in prophetic certainty.

In its very act of purifying the celebration of Union of its usual rhetorical context of mutual delegitimization, Whitman intervenes all the more forcefully into a debate whose full dimensions need to be brought back to light for the achievement of the cluster to be fully appreciated. By dipping deeper into the very tradition the Union-savers had appropriated, Whitman turned affection from both the medium and the motivation of political restraint into a call for action. He was able to accomplish this task while avoiding the defensive cues of a less confident form of political antislavery because the national language of manly affection that had come to be monopolized by the conservatives in this context itself offered a way to break down the conservatives' rigid view of the nation's demarcations. However useful for purposes of proscription a sanitized version of manly affection had become to Union-savers, that tradition also permitted bolder claims of expansive nationality—claims that would not presuppose the constrictive rules of national participation that compromise with slavery seemed to demand.

The originality of "Calamus," therefore, resides in its contribution to a broader Northern political and cultural project to "make Freedom aggressive."[64] Whitman contributes to that project in a way that would have been at once unimaginable to his contemporaries before it was produced and recognizable as a realization of that goal after the fact. Part of that recognition would have come from Whitman's participation in a code of affective response that was not limited to narrow political questions. Whitman could take up this code innocently, as if in doing so he were not already challenging the purposes to which the conservatives had put it. Through that tactic, he turns the common appeals for a democratic brotherly affection to the end of justifying national action that does not take into account the interests of state, section, or property. Even in this late stage of his party's rise to dominance, then, Whitman took on preparatory work that did not

so much contribute to the discourse promoting a national responsibility to limit slavery as make the formation and dissemination of such a discourse seem the highest achievement of patriotism.

The work in American studies on the role of national affect has enhanced our understanding of Whitman's poems by placing them in a line of development at once literary, cultural, and ideological. Thanks in part to that work, "Calamus" no longer seems a personal or completely idiosyncratic literary event but a step in the path to a new national self-representation. Yet, at the same time, "Calamus" needs to be seen as an intervention into a much more self-contained and historically delimited discursive struggle. When dominant enough in particular contexts, the language of affection could become a kind of regulatory system by which the extent and limits of political action were rigidly mapped and certain groups were excluded (just as Coviello and Dana D. Nelson expose the gender and racial exclusions built into the most anodyne expressions of affect nation). Intervention into the national questions that were at stake would then depend on remapping those contours and opening the discourse up to new possible messages.

That "Calamus" belongs to that struggle is, paradoxically, suggested by an event that brought any contest over the rhetoric of affection in the North to an abrupt end and freed the poem to perform other tasks. As Elizabeth Fenton and Valerie Rohy have explored, once the war began, the poem cooperated with national self-representations in new ways that continued after the war's end—and not just because of Whitman's additions to his text.[65] That was possible because the language of Union ceased to be a contested discourse in the North: according to the political scientist Rogan Kersh, "As the North-South conflict began there was, for the first time since the 1780s, no confusion over union's meaning"[66] With a war being fought to save the Union, no longer was Union a code for the extent to which the national will could be exercised against individual interests. The very fact that "Calamus" migrated to different affiliated representations the moment war broke out confirms the importance of the earlier representations to the poem's original function. "Calamus" clearly belongs to a variety of moments, a variety of periods, but insofar as it is a creature of its original publication in 1860, it illustrates Whitman's engagement in contemporary discursive struggles that seem far removed from his utopian representations but that are, in fact, deeply bound up with them.

Even apart from the competition over its terms, the affective Union itself threatened to reconfigure what was examined in the previous chapter: the image of an idealized community of republican saviors eschewing finality as the republic's death. What Whitman represents in "Poem of the Road" as a dangerously easeful acceptance of rigid social roles could be brushed off in the larger national context as citizens free within their local world but bonding over state lines by dint of shared principles, commitment, and affection. Those rules of republican subjectivity forwarded the logic of finality, of freezing in time the obligations of the free-state citizen. "Calamus," then, not only fully transfigures the conservative affective Union but does so in a way that allows the 1860 edition to empower other prophetic ideals undergirding party antislavery discourse.

By the same token, the full implications of "Calamus" emerge only in the context of the complete 1860 edition. The very critique of obedience would lose half its effect were it taken out of the context of the two labor poems considered in the second chapter. Without their ideal of rising simultaneously into self-consciousness and into sovereignty, the political call in "Calamus" for the friendship to take "permanent shape and will" might seem a mere abstract democratic maxim. And without the framing of "A Boston Ballad," "Calamus" could be taken more as a call for a recovered common energy than as a breaking down of the rigid boundaries that have cramped and dehumanized the people, cutting them off from the lifeblood of the future. Tellingly, "A Boston Ballad" appears immediately before "Calamus" in the 1860 edition, as if "Calamus" offered a remedy to the pathologies smothering a true participation in a historicized present. And the phantasmagorical show in the 1860 cluster "Messenger Leaves," where the political realities of the present moment appear as the foul emanations of a benumbed consciousness, sharpens the demands already made on the hyperconscious comrades of "Calamus." If "Calamus" remaps the nation along lines that free it from the restraints promoted by the Union-savers, that promise of a new mobility and cohesion can be fulfilled only when the nation has been roused into consciousness and stirred to action.

Conclusion

If *Leaves of Grass* excludes party from any of its prescriptions for national redemption, the same can be said of Whitman's party: it defined its mission not as the triumph of a faction but as the people's entry into their true historical role. Like other parties before it, it equated its victory with the blossoming of the citizenry into "the disenthralled hosts of Freedom."[1] The fictions of spontaneous emergence and expression supporting this account are taken at their word in *Leaves of Grass*.

The affinities between party and *Leaves of Grass* suggest that a wider lens should be placed upon party discourse than one suited for mere calculated appeals aimed at persuading voters. In mid-century, the umbilical cord linking party with Whitman's idiosyncratic literary work is the kind of revolutionary rhetoric that has often been examined in the context of European Romanticism. The American variations on this rhetoric course through the veins of the party appeal. They are not incidental flourishes but the basis upon which a party laid claim to a genealogical authority in a postrevolutionary culture holding on to residual prejudices against modern political mechanisms. Turning their glance away discreetly from those mechanisms, parties represented their goal as completing and hence truly realizing the Revolution in their own struggles to vanquish the republic's internal enemies. Only personal and collective rejuvenation could bring about that end. In a party's own representations, less important than any contest for power was the conversion narrative that would decide that contest: each voter traveling down a course from inertia, isolation, and incoherent outrage toward recognition, awakening, affiliation, and redemption.

No matter how fantastical this narrative appears, it authorizes us to treat party discourse as an important part of the rhetorical field to which other varieties of nineteenth-century national self-fashioning belong. More than any other discursive practice, party treated as a single matter its exhortations

to the people and its prophecy of American history. It insisted that the people faced, in the present moment, a choice between becoming active agents of a realized American future or passive victims of a nation's entropic decline. The fact that a party typically called for remarkably minimal policy change while it made this case has obscured its cultural function. To be sure, in practical terms, party discourse, when compared with the appeals of more substantive reform or revolutionary movements, demanded little of its addressee; but this very laxity freed it to articulate the most extravagant claims of national regeneration. In its representations of the people's potential and peril, mid-nineteenth-century party discourse was, at its base, prophetic.

It is as such a prophetic nationalizing discourse that party extends its reach into *Leaves of Grass*. While they make no reference to the individual voter or to partisanship, the antebellum editions of *Leaves of Grass*, as the last four chapters have examined, call upon the utopian promise of party that campaign rhetoric invoked. Like his party, Whitman foresaw a series of interlocking processes by which the people end their internal exile: an awakening to labor's true world-shaping role that charges momentary acts of self-respect with historical potency; adopting a mode of memory, accessible only through action, that reinhabits the nation's founding spirit; mobilizing that spirit into a propelling impulse that, by tapping organic power, holds off forever a deathly finality; and forging the nation's unifying affective bonds, annealed by the people's defiance and given efficacy in their daring.

Party discourse made the voters themselves the bearers of these promises. Under its representations, the rhetoric of crisis encouraged by regular elections is turned into a rhetoric of embodiment, where the people could either offer themselves to history for the redemptive party's purposes or accept the gradual but inexorable diminution of their sovereignty and hence of their selves. If the people "rise in the dignity and power of Freemen,"[2] that single performance turns them into the vessel of the future they will help ensure. Whitman renders permanent this cyclical crisis and thereby charges each American with an immediate obligation to become both an instrument of and a figure for the nation's realizations, not so much through a chosen action as through a jolt of self-sovereignty. The people enact the future in a moment because they are, in their truest selves, already constituted by it. Apprehending themselves in those terms alone confers the right to rule that their passivity has thrown into question.

Both party and Whitman, therefore, adhered to what J. G. A. Pocock defined as the central premise of civic republicanism, that the "development of the individual towards self-fulfillment is possible only when the individual acts as a citizen, that is, as a conscious and autonomous participant in an autonomous decision-taking political community."[3] Yet for Whitman and party antislavery alike, the citizen is more than an individual developing toward self-fulfillment; each voter or citizen is a nodal point in the nation's development, standing between the nation's original impetus and the promise of future realization. Assigned this role, the people must accept that on their independence rests the fate of the nation, and Whitman holds up a higher standard for that independence than does traditional republicanism. For Whitman, it is an independence not just of condition but of self-image and consciousness that will automatically manifest itself in the individual's stance toward the nation's pillars of social and political authority. Thus, despite ignoring party, *Leaves of Grass* returns again and again to the relationship the people must establish with the false guardians of the nation, a relationship that is the final test of their republic-nurturing independence. That relationship, in both modes of discourse, will grow out of the address itself.

The most fundamental difference between the party appeals in prose or verse and Whitman's poetry lies in Whitman's particular brand of revelation. Most notably in "Poem of Many in One" and at the end of "Poem of the Road," Whitman at times turns to something like exhortation, but his speakers rarely position themselves as rigidly toward their idealized countrymen as that mode demands. Whereas in the party discourse the fictional voice directly urges the addressee to join it in a project of national redemption, necessitated by its account of the nation's perils, in Whitman's poetry a different relationship obtains between narrative prophecy and communication: the speaker must address his compatriots even as he meditates on them, so that the two functions join in the struggle to identify promise within their common lineage and constitution.[4] He looks for a response from them more fundamental than concurrence, and searching for it involves becoming himself an agent for that national promise. When he finds the promise veiled or its source disordered in his visionary account, his appeals to his projected audience may either resolve that problem or become entangled within his fluctuation between wonder and uncertainty. In party appeals the only equivalent doubt comes from the overshadowing danger, a danger upon which the appeal is premised,

that the addressee will revert to old patterns of irresponsible complacency and hence refuse to heed the warning in time. In both modes, however, the speaker anticipates and, in that way, depends on the fictionalized audience's signal of true affiliation. Both urge the addressees to recognize themselves within that affiliation before it is too late and to recognize a potential nation constituted by that moment—in the hope, as put by the critic Maire Mullins, that "what is within the reader will emerge, triumphant."[5] This demand alone fills out a complete represented world, for its purpose is to harness, by constructing into its ideal form, the source of the nation's power.

The political antislavery movement had to hold out this promise that the people would redeem power. Without that promise, they had no choice but to read as a symptom of a declining system the key problem that vexed them: the "infidelity to Freedom"[6] demonstrated consistently over the years by the free states. This problem needed to be both explained and solved, and the explanation most fruitful of a solution was to reread that infidelity as an infidelity to the self. The people's negligence under this light could be seen not as the reflection of a deeper historical apostasy but as a reversible breakdown in the mechanisms of self-ownership and expression—equivalent to what at a personal level would be debauchery. Whitman thus contributes to his party's project by stopping only briefly, in "A Boston Ballad," on that part of its appeal that involves condemning the people for betraying the nation's founding principles. He puts the emphasis instead on another trope from party: that of the people arising in their might by tapping their neglected deeply planted resources and, in the process, making the outside world reflect their republican capacities, having unchained them from mere private usages. With this prophecy confirmed through the speaker's apprehensions, the past betrayal of freedom ceases to be anything more dire than a clogged pathway of transmission, both over historical time and within the individual citizen. The antebellum editions seek and find the hidden currents that unblock American history and send it on its natural route.

Further work needs to be done on how the cycle as a whole reinforces that achievement by finding, paradoxically, in the very temporal limits on the speaker's success the permanent survival of the republic's life-giving power. A useful model for approaching that feature is the work of rhetorical critic Michael William Pfau, who has offered an important interpretation of Charles Sumner's *The Crime against Kansas.* Pfau sees this speech as both

puzzling out and constituting an answer to the republican "problem of time," by which republics seem fated to diverge from their founding principles and lose their founding energy by their mere transit over years and decades. To him, Sumner's oratorical text itself sets out to mimic "the finitude of the republic." *The Crime against Kansas* does not simply describe the fruits of the nation's degradation; it is "an iconic representation of temporal aspects of republicanism." In its deep structure, it shows both its vulnerability to the passage of time and mirrors in its own survival the program Sumner lays out to redeem the republic: the temporal organization of the text "iconically represents the stages . . . through which all republics must pass if they are to survive."[7] Pfau calls for a wider adoption of his reading practice in understanding republican texts, and, indeed, it is especially applicable to the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, which also "represent[s] the life cycle of the republic within the life cycle of [its] textual performance" (389).

The republic must develop over time in one way or another, and the present can plant in soil that fosters either organic growth or decay. The speaker subjects himself to time for the purpose of modeling to the republic the only generative system that can survive that necessity. Making himself the agent for the healthful projection of temporary energies dispels the nightmarish somnambulant world toward which the political class is steering the nation. The 1860 edition encodes the nation's triumph over republican decline in the speaker's triumph over the forces intent on fetishizing his powers and barring them from realization. In that light many of the overtly political (though not party) poems in the clusters "Thoughts" and "Messenger Leaves" within the 1860 edition need to be analyzed. The republicanism of the 1860 edition incubates the ideal formations this study has examined as prophetic potentials not quite yet realized. The speaker takes on the task of exemplifying in his own being the long-term mechanisms by which the people can avoid squandering their patrimony in corruption.

A case along these lines remains to be made; this study considers the speaker primarily in his capacity as a voice, giving the kind of directives to the people he has earned the right to formulate through his struggle to observe them aright. In the parts of *Leaves of Grass* considered here, the relationship between speaker and projected audience is mediated through his roaming and penetrating perception but not through his own organic being. What these two features of the antebellum editions, however, have in common

with each other and also with Republican appeals is their call to disestablish and defetishize the present moment and thereby redeem it.

Party antislavery saw only one way to prevent the republic's powers from descending into dead forms. To avoid the fate of being reduced to pliant instruments of an oligarchy's rule, the people must, in Theodore Sedgwick's words, "turn . . . in scorn from a false present to lay hold on a true future."[8] Whitman's mission to open up the present to the future by recalibrating the nation's relationship to the past was key to the Republican project. The party sought to rewrite American history until its legacy could not be distinguished from the present obligation to imitate and to outdo. Whitman furthers the project of personalizing that obligation to act in a truly historicized mode: he paints its alternative as a living death in a preestablished subjectivity that erases the distinction between the citizen's limited social identity and eventual historical role. The party's account of the people coming into their own as they finally assume their true sovereign power is mythologized by Whitman as each American throwing off the forces pinioning and dehumanizing them.

For Whitman the gravest threat to this recovery can be summed up in his recurrent bogeyman that plays a similar role in party discourse: "obedience." When they obey, citizens prove that the resources latent with the means to unshackle them have been overridden; they each become a shell for that self-less obedience rather than an instrument of the nation's patrimony that could restore them to themselves. Obedience's polar opposite, defiance, reaps benefits quite apart from its practical consequences: it shows the people unencumbered, from the temporal and temporary mantles shrouding their true American identity, and able to express their authorship of the nation's history in a definitive gesture, one pointing toward "the haughty defiance of the Year 1" (1860, 113). As the antidote to a deference-based social system, as the act that channels a personal accomplishment through a public deed, as an implicit rebuke to the conservative principle that the nation was constituted by accommodation and compromise, as the antithesis to the complacency that allows the nation to drift toward despotism, as an instinctual maneuver that reconciles clinging fast to achieved gains and confronting a present necessity, and as an affective response that Whitman takes to be an almost involuntary expression of the people's inner nature—defiance is the engine, as much in its form as in its content, of the nation's liberation from false representatives.

The poem's faith in such impulses conjures up narratives of joint feeling and action, which annul that segregation of innate powers within private realms mystifying Whitman in *The Eighteenth Presidency!*. The speaker in *Leaves of Grass* breaks through the tract's doubts that the "effervescence" of the nation's healthy activity will congeal into collective republican will. The speaker's success at restoring, if nowhere else than in his prophetic vision, the link between daily impulse and long-term historical role casts a favorable backward light on the lineage feeding his penetration. He reestablishes the nation's line of descent by recovering himself as heir. This self-reflexive turn is the same one taken by the Republicans in the diagnosis of their own speech acts as the last hope for national regeneration. Once placed in the proper trajectory by the people's sanction, those acts will prove to be the living spark within the republican citizen implanted by the nation's heritage. Their true reception itself unifies the nation on liberty's ground and dispels the "hallucination of nationality"[9] emitted by slavery-accommodating parties. Party, as a mode of address to the people, gave antislavery discourse the same opportunity it gave *Leaves of Grass*: the chance to represent allegiance alone as the token of a redeemed nation.

Notes

Chapter 1

1. Martin Klammer, *Whitman, Slavery, and the Emergence of "Leaves of Grass"* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 27–44.

2. This view has recently received a welcome challenge in John Mac Kilgore's "The Free State of Whitman: Enthusiasm and Dismemberment in the 1860 *Leaves of Grass*," *ESQ* 58, no. 4 (2012): 533.

3. Bill Hardwig, "Walt Whitman and the Epic Tradition: Political and Poetical Voices in 'Song of Myself,'" *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 17, no. 4 (Spring 2000): 166–88; Robert J. Scholnick, "Whigs and Democrats, The Past and Future: The Political Emerson and Whitman's 1855 Preface," *American Periodicals* 26, no. 1 (2016): 70–91.

4. John Greenleaf Whittier, *The Panorama and Other Poems* (Boston: Hubart and Robbins, 1856), 13.

5. Walt Whitman, *The Eighteenth Presidency!*, ed. Edward F. Grier (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1956). All further references to *The Eighteenth Presidency!* in chapter 1 will be cited by parenthetic page numbers within the text.

6. Betsy Erkkila, *Whitman the Political Poet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 132.

7. Edward F. Grier, introduction to *The Eighteenth Presidency! A Critical Text*, 9. For the same conclusion, see Gay Wilson Allen, *The Solitary Singer: A Critical Biography of Walt Whitman* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), 198.

8. George M. Fredrickson, *The Inner Civil War: Northern Intellectuals and the Crisis of the Union* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1965), 20.

9. Erkkila, *Whitman the Political Poet*, 130.

10. Ezra Greenspan, *Walt Whitman and the American Reader* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 164.

11. David S. Reynolds, *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 150.

12. Peter Coviello, *Intimacy in America: Dreams of Affiliation in Antebellum Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 141.

13. Coviello's reluctance to use the term "Republican" here is also reflected in the well-known article whose authors begin with *The Eighteenth Presidency!* to present their case that politics was not central to most Americans' lives. Glenn C. Altschuler and Stuart M. Blumin, "'Where Is the Real America?': Politics and Popular Consciousness in the Antebellum Era," *American Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (June 1997): 225.

14. Kerry C. Larson, *Whitman's Drama of Consensus* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), xvii.

15. Mark Maslan, *Whitman Possessed: Poetry, Sexuality, and Popular Authority* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 105.

16. Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

17. Daniel J. McInerney, *The Fortunate Heirs of Freedom: Abolition and Republican Thought* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); Jonathan H. Earle, *Jacksonian Antislavery and the Politics of Free Soil, 1824–1854* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Michael J. McManus, *Political Abolitionism in Wisconsin, 1840–1861* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1998); Michael D. Pierson, *Free Hearts and Free Homes: Gender and American Antislavery Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Mark Voss-Hubbard, "The Political Culture of Emancipation: Morality, Politics, and the State in Garrisonian Abolitionism, 1854–1863," *Journal of American Studies* 29, no. 2 (August 1995): 168–9; James Oakes, *The Scorpion's Sting: Antislavery and the Coming of the Civil War* (New York: Norton, 2014).

18. "The Predilections and Ties of Party," *Yarmouth* (MA) *Register*, August 8, 1856, p. 2, col. 5.

19. "Coming Events Cast Their Shadows Before," *Oxford* (ME) *Democrat*, December 1, 1854, p. 2, col. 3.

20. "The Convention on the 22nd," *Fort Wayne* (IN) *Weekly Times*, September 13, 1855, p.2, col. 1.

21. Henry Clay Fish, *Freedom or Despotism: The Voice of Our Brother's Blood* (Newark: Douglass and Starbuck, 1856), 12.

22. "The Slave Power," *Marshall* (MI) *Statesman*, August 6, 1856, p. 2, col. 3; "The Spring Campaign," *Meriden* (CT) *Transcript*, February 15, 1855, p. 2, col. 2. The historian Gerald Leonard has examined how traditional antipartyism could fuse with Northern antislavery on a variety of ideological grounds: *The Invention of Party Politics: Federalism, Popular Sovereignty, and Constitutional Development in Jacksonian Illinois* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 61–2, 65–6. For the paradoxes of antipartyism among Know-Nothings, see Mark Voss-Hubbard, *Beyond Party: Cultures of Antipartisanship in Northern Politics before the Civil War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

23. To be sure, the new party's various opponents occasionally shrugged off the antiparty rhetoric as meaningless window dressing to the formation of a new dangerous faction. One Democratic campaign poem, for instance, scorned the new party's hypocrisy: "isn't he going for party now, if Republican is his name?" ("Know Nothings, Republicans, Whigs," *Montrose* (PA) *Democrat*, May 29, 1856, p. 2, col. 4). More often, however, the Democrats' disinclination to capitalize on the apparent contradiction comes out in their refusal to acknowledge that the Republicans even rose to the status of party, labeling them a temporary coalition of the ambitious, fanatical, and discontent.

24. "Governor Seward's Speech," *Oneida* (NY) *Weekly Herald*, September 11, 1860, p. 4, col. 2; *Detroit* (MI) *Daily Advertiser*, September 5, 1860, p. 1, col. 6.

25. *Proceedings of the First Three Republican National Conventions* (Minneapolis: Harrison and Smith, 1893), 31.

26. Gerald Leonard, "The Ironies of Partyism and Antipartyism: Origins of Partisan Political Culture in Jacksonian Illinois," *Illinois Historical Journal* 87, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 24.

27. Ronald P. Formisano, "The 'Party Period' Revisited," *Journal of American History* 86, no. 1 (June 1999): 98. Mark Voss-Hubbard points out that "nineteenth-century third parties defined themselves as antiparties": "The 'Third Party Tradition' Reconsidered: Third Parties and American Public Life, 1830–1900," *Journal of American History* 86, no. 1 (June 1999): 124. Though the term "third party" was not in common currency at the

time and though the new antislavery party turned out that year to be one of the contenders in a two-party system, the Republicans' rhetoric was shot through with the views that Voss-Hubbard describes.

28. "Southern Aggression," *Salem* (MA) *Register*, September 11, 1856, p. 2, col. 2.

29. For the Whig part in that construction, see Daniel Walker Howe, *The Political Culture of the American Whigs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 52–3.

30. "Honesty Discarded by Bank Politicians," *Gloucester* (MA) *Democrat*, May 25, 1838, p. 2, col. 3. For antipartyism within the Whig party, see Ronald P. Formisano, "Political Character, Antipartyism and the Second Party System," *American Quarterly* 21, no. 4 (Winter 1969): 683–709.

31. Ahaz Merchant et al., "To the Free Soil Democracy of Northern Ohio," *Cleveland True Democrat*, October 13, 1848, p. 2, col. 2.

32. "Speech of Honorable George W. Julian at the Free Democratic State Convention," *American Observer* (Morrisville, VT), July 28, 1853, p. 1, col. 6.

33. For more on Whitman's reaction to this development, see Klammer, *Whitman, Slavery, and the Emergence of "Leaves of Grass,"* 70.

34. Walt Whitman, *Selected Letters of Walt Whitman*, ed. Edwin Haviland Miller (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1990), 22.

35. "The Plutocratic Alliance," *Worcester* (MA) *Palladium*, November 6, 1856, p. 2, col. 6. Though this charge was not exclusive to them, Republicans with Democratic antecedents tended to emphasize the degeneracy of the Democratic administration in turning the government over to the "vast and odious monopoly interest" of slavery ("Our Position," *Hartford* (CT) *Evening Press*, February 28, 1856, p.2, col. 3).

36. Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 165–8; Earle, *Jacksonian Antislavery and the Politics of Free Soil*, 7; Judah B. Ginsberg, "Barnburners, Free Soilers, and the New York Republican Party," *New York History* 57, no. 4 (October 1976): 492.

37. M. Wynn Thomas has reflected on the reservations Whitman likely had toward the Republican party, partly on these economic grounds: *The Lunar Light of Whitman's Poetry* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 182. On these tensions within the Republican party, see Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 169–76. Foner notes a paradoxical outcome

particularly relevant to Whitman: that the "radical Democracy," those most steadfast in their opposition to Whig economic policies (sometimes called locofocos), was also the very group most likely to convert to Republicanism and thereby ally with former Whigs. One explanation is that the particular economic disputes between Whigs and Democrats were less important in and of themselves than as reflections of the locofocos' cultural allegiance to equality and to freedom from government-sanctioned class rule.

38. "Letter from Hon. Wm. Slade, Read at the Buffalo Convention," *Free Soil Courier and Liberty Gazette* (Burlington, VT), September 21, 1848, p. 1, col. 6.

39. Republicans were so careful to draw this distinction that even some campaign poems were devoted to it: "'True to the South,'" *Vermont Watchman and State Journal* (Montpelier, VT), September 12, 1856, p. 1, col. 2.

40. "Our Duty to the South," *Springfield* (MA) *Republican*, September 16, 1856, p. 2, col. 1.

41. "Free Laboring Men!" *Connecticut Press* (Hartford, CT), October 27, 1860, p. 1, col. 3.

42. The Democratic party itself was frequently represented in Republican polemics through Whitman's imagery of funerals, corpses, and putrid flesh. See, for example, "The National Party," *Buffalo* (NY) *Morning Express*, September 25, 1855, p. 2, col. 1.

43. "Speech of Mr. Galloway," *New-York Daily Tribune*, July 21, 1856, p. 5, col. 5.

44. "The Next President," *Marietta* (OH) *Intelligencer*, June 21, 1856, p. 2, col. 2.

45. "The Position of the Buchanan Democrats South," *Cleveland* (OH) *Morning Leader*, October 1, 1856, p. 2, col. 2.

46. *City Advertiser* (Charlestown, MA), October 1, 1856, p. 2, col. 1; *People's Journal* (Greenwich, NY), June 8, 1854, p. 2, col. 3.

47. "The Last Platform," *Hartford* (CT) *Evening Press*, February 25, 1856, p. 2, col. 1.

48. "The Republican Prospect," *Buffalo* (NY) *Morning Express*, October 8, 1855, p. 2, col. 1.

49. "Young America and Old Hunkerdom," *Boston Daily Bee*, July 9, 1856, p. 2, col. 1.

50. Ely Moore, "Honorable Ely Moore's Letter," *Independent Republican* (Goshen, NY), July 10, 1840, p. 2, col. 5.

51. "True Conservatism," *Boston Atlas*, August 18, 1855, p. 2, col. 1.

52. Most Republican pieces asserting this claim did not accompany it with Whitman's call to fill the offices with laborers, but some did. See, for example, "Political Parties," *Marshall* (MI) *Statesman*, November 5, 1856, p. 2, cols. 2–3.

53. "A Word with Young Men," *Portland Advertiser*, October 29, 1856, p. 2, col. 1.

54. "Our Government," *Albany* (NY) *Evening Journal*, May 17, 1854, p. 2, col. 3.

55. "The Republican Party a National Party," *Albany* (NY) *Evening Journal*, November 3, 1855, p. 2, col. 3.

56. "The March of Freedom," *The Republican Campaign Songster* (New York: Miller, Orton, and Mulligan, 1856), 50.

57. Larson, *Whitman's Drama of Consensus*, 88.

58. "An Octogenarian Patriot on the Nomination of Fremont," *Indiana American* (Brookville, IN), August 22, 1856, p. 1, col. 7.

59. "Speech of Hon. Edward Wade," *Independent Democrat* (Elyria, OH), October 1, 1856, p. 1, col. 4.

60. "Message of the President," *Milwaukee* (WI) *Daily Sentinel*, January 3, 1856, p. 2, col. 1. See also "Blindness of Fanaticism," *Delphi* (IN) *Weekly Times*, October 3, 1855, p. 2, col. 3.

61. Ivy G. Wilson, "Organic Compacts, Form, and the Cultural Logic of Cohesion; or, Whitman Re-Bound," *ESQ* 54, nos. 1–4 (2008): 201.

62. Jonathan Culler, "Apostrophe," *Diacritics* 7, no. 4 (Winter 1977): 63.

63. "Slavery against Freedom," *St. Lawrence Republican* (Ogdensburgh, NY), March 25, 1856, p. 1, col. 4. For another example of Northern unanimity magically bestowing free speech on Southerners, see "The Progress of Ruffianism," *Orange County Journal* (Bradford, VT), June 7, 1856, p. 2, col. 2.

64. J. Mark Smith, "Apostrophe, or the Lyric Art of Turning Away," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 49, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 412.

65. Sean Franzel, "The Politics and Media of Apostrophe in Hölderlin's *Hyperion*," *German Quarterly* 82, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 156.

66. "Gathering of the Elements," *Cleveland Morning Leader*, July 14, 1856, p. 2, col. 2.

67. *National Era*, August 7, 1856, p. 128, col. 1.

68. Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* 1860. "U.S. Editions of *Leaves of Grass*," The Walt Whitman Archive, edited by Matt Cohen, Ed Folsom, and Kenneth M. Price. Accessed October 11, 2019. https://whitmanarchive.org/published/LG/index.html, 106. All further references in this study to *Leaves of Grass* will be to "U.S. Editions of *Leaves of Grass*" in The Walt Whitman Archive and will be cited by parenthetic page numbers within the text.

69. Republicans would occasionally use that very term to describe conservative presumption. See, for instance, "Sectionalism of Parties," *Buffalo* (NY) *Daily Republic*, October 15, 1856, p. 2, col. 3.

70. "It Cannot Be Done," *Dubuque* (IA) *Weekly Times*, May 19, 1859, p. 4, col. 2. For similar phrasing, see "The Times," *Erie County* (PA) *Gazette*, June 19, 1856, p. 2, col. 5.

71. M. Wynn Thomas, "Whitman and the Dreams of Labor," in *Walt Whitman: The Centennial Essays,* ed. Ed Folsom (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1994), 136.

72. Richard Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 58.

73. Louis Montrose, "Spenser and the Elizabethan Political Imaginary," *ELH* 69, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 907–8.

74. Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), x.

75. Colin Wells, *Poetry Wars: Verse and Politics in the American Revolution and Early Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 5.

76. "The Chicago Convention," *Buffalo* (NY) *Morning Express*, May 16, 1860, p. 2, col. 1.

Chapter 2

1. Whitman, *The Eighteenth Presidency!*, 32.

2. See, for instance, "The Mechanics for Free Kansas and Free Labor," *New-York Daily Tribune*, September 6, 1856, p. 1, cols. 2–3 and "Senator Wilson before the Mechanics and Working-men of New York," *New-York Daily Times*, October 6, 1856, p. 1, col. 1.

3. Jerome A. Mabey, "A Republican Lyric," *Boston Daily Atlas*, October 28, 1856, p. 1, col. 6.

4. For a poem that blends together three traditions—free soil, the homestead movement, and the labor celebration (to be examined later in this chapter)—see Duganne, "Who Owneth America's Soil," *Dover* (NH) *Telegraph*, March 2, 1848, p. 1, col. 1.

5. "The Equality of the States," *Milwaukee Daily News*, September 15, 1860, p. 2, col. 1. This had been a common Democratic point for years. See Henry C. Murphy, "Ratification Meeting," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 19, 1856, p. 2, col. 3.

6. William H. Burleigh, ed., *The Republican Pocket Pistol: A Collection of Facts, Opinions and Arguments for Freedom* (New York: H. Dayton, 1860), 35.

7. This was a point made almost universally by Republicans of all inclinations and antecedents. A group of future bolters to the Republicans, reduced it to a universal formula: "wherever slavery is introduced, there labor is degraded to a servile employment" ("The Voice of the Radical Democracy of New York," *Ontario Messenger* (Canandaigua, NY), June 4, 1856, p. 1, col. 5).

8. Klammer, *Whitman, Slavery, and the Emergence of "Leaves of Grass,"* 31.

9. For an illuminating account of the debate among historians, see Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Imperiled Union: Essays on the Background of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 108–14. Stampp concludes that the difference between the two schools of historians on this matter "was one of emphasis" (114).

10. "Address, of the Working Men of Pittsburgh, to Their Fellow Working Men, in Pennsylvania," *Huntingdon* (PA) *Journal*, October 22, 1856, p. 1, col. 5.

11. Parke Godwin, *Political Essays* (New York: Dix, Edwards., 1856), 45, 33.

12. "Our Country," *Newark* (NY) *Whig*, December 14, 1854, p. 2, col. 3.

13. Godwin, *Political Essays*, 44. Godwin's narrative was commonly found in Republican representations. See, for instance, "The Interest of the Working Man of the North in the Present Political Issue," *Daily Commercial* (Cincinnati, OH), September 4, 1856, p. 2, col. 1.

14. "The Naturalized Voters," *Marietta* (OH) *Intelligencer*, September 13, 1855, p. 2, col. 2.

15. "Great Anti-Nebraska Convention," *Ohio Repository* (Canton, OH), March 29, 1854, p. 2, col. 7.

16. Eva Sheppard Wolf, "Early Free-Labor Thought and the Contest over Slavery in the Early Republic" in *Contesting Slavery: The Politics of Bondage and Freedom in the New American Nation,* ed. John Craig Hammond and Matthew Mason (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 38, 34.

17. "Col. Fremont's Reply," *Wisconsin Mirror* (Kilbourn City, WI), July 22, 1856, p. 2, col. 2.

18. "Aristocracy of Wealth," *Worcester* (MA) *Palladium*, November 27, 1844, p. 2, col. 1. For similar formulations, see, for instance, "Log Cabins, —Hard Cider,—Federal Blarney," *Independent Republican* (Goshen, NY), May 8, 1840, p. 2, col. 3.

19. See Bancroft's well-known letter, where his definition of labor ("the application of the human faculties to a useful end") "inexorably excludes every enemy of the greater good for the greater number," thereby steering the exaltation of labor to Democratic rhetorical ends: "Mr. Bancroft's Letter," *Green Mountain Democrat* (Fayetteville, VT), February 13, 1835, p. 1, col. 4.

20. "Mr. Webster's Speech in Faneuil Hall," *Schenectady* (NY) *Cabinet*, October 31, 1848, p. 2, col. 2.

21. For an account of the tensions that complicated this movement, see the first chapter of Nicholas K. Bromell, *By the Sweat of the Brow: Literature and Labor in Antebellum America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 15–39.

22. Orville Dewey, "The Nobility of Labor," *Lockport* (NY) *Balance*, October 19, 1838, p. 1, col. 6; *Cortland* (NY) *Republican and Eagle*, January 29, 1839, p. 1, cols. 5–6.

23. Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class 1788–1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 61.

24. Alex Gourevitch, *From Slavery to the Cooperative Commonwealth: Labor and Republican Liberty in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 14.

25. "True Dignity of Labor," *Fort Wayne* (IN) *Daily Times*, December 11, 1855, p. 2, cols. 1–2.

26. "Columbia College," *New-York Daily Times*, July 27, 1854, p. 3, col. 2.

27. Wolf, "Early Free-Labor Thought and the Contest over Slavery in the Early Republic," 39–40.

28. See, for instance, Miss Wentworth, "The Nobility of Mechanics," *The Huntingdon* (PA) *Journal*, October 23, 1849, p. 1, col. 5.

29. Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, xiii; Foner, "Free Labor and Nineteenth-Century Political Ideology" in *The Market Revolution in America: Social, Political, and Religious Expressions, 1800–1880*, ed. Melvyn Stokes and Stephen Conway (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 102.

30. Foner, "Free Labor and Nineteenth-Century Political Ideology," 107.

31. Thomas, *The Lunar Light of Whitman's Poetry*, 28; Lance Newman, *Our Common Dwelling: Henry Thoreau, Transcendentalism, and the Class Politics of Nature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 27.

32. "American Workingmen, Versus Slavery," *Brooklyn* (NY) *Daily Eagle*, September 1, 1847, p. 2, col. 1.

33. Andrew Lawson, *Walt Whitman and the Class Struggle* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 11.

34. "American Workingmen, Versus Slavery." For a piece that illustrates the continuity between Whitman's free soil appeal and Jacksonian appeals to workingmen, see "A Meeting of the Mechanics and Workingmen of the City of Albany," *Daily Albany* (NY) *Argus*, June 6, 1836, p. 1, col. 7.

35. "Address to the Republican Young Men of the County of Schenectady," *Mohawk Sentinel* (Schenectady, NY), October 16, 1824, p. 3, col. 2.

36. "The Whig Opinion of Workingmen," *Gloucester* (MA) *Democrat*, November 4, 1836, p. 2, col. 2.

37. "Slave-Holding Democracy," *Emancipator* (Boston, MA), September 2, 1846, p. 1, cols. 5–6. For the continuity between this appeal in abolitionist and in later party antislavery writing, see Williston H. Lofton, "Abolition and Labor: Appeal of the Abolitionists to the Northern Working Classes," *Journal of Negro History* 33, no. 3 (July 1948): 249–61.

38. "Men of Labor," *The Freemen's Glee Book* (New York: Miller, Orton, and Mulligan, 1856), 37; *Independent American* (Platteville, WI), September 1, 1856, p. 1, col. 3. Among prose works, one piece illustrates vividly how this warning of an ultimate cultural victory for slavery blends with

traditional descriptions of republican independence and condemnations of the money-making spirit: "On the Stump," *Worcester* (MA) *Palladium*, September 24, 1856, p. 2, cols. 1–3.

39. Whitman, *The Eighteenth Presidency!*, 27.

40. The date of the *Leaves of Grass* edition will be included in the parenthetic page citation for all block quotations. For shorter quotations, the date will be specified only when the edition for the cited quotation differs from that of the previous quotation.

41. To be sure, this was not an exclusively American tradition. American newspapers often reproduced British poems that, while somewhat different, fell within the general parameters of the labor poem. See, for instance, Richard M. Milnes, "Labor," *Charter Oak* (Hartford, CT), July 30, 1846, p. 1, col. 1.

42. Alan Trachtenberg, "The Politics of Labor and the Poet's Work: A Reading of 'A Song for Occupations,'" in *Walt Whitman: The Centennial Essays*, ed. Ed Folsom (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1994), 123.

43. Rufus Wilmot Griswold, ed., *The Poets and Poetry of America: With an Historical Introduction* (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1847), 421. This poem continued to be reproduced for years in the periodical press, perhaps because of subsequent editions of Griswold's anthology. See, for instance, "The Laborer," *Kennebec* (ME) *Journal*, May 1, 1857, p. 1, col. 1.

44. Margaret Ronda, "Georgic Disenchantment in American Poetry," *Genre: Forms of Discourse and Culture* 46, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 62.

45. Trachtenberg, "The Politics of Labor," 129, 130.

46. Thomas, *The Lunar Light of Whitman's Poetry*, 30.

47. Isaac F. Shepard, "A Song to Labor," *Republican Journal* (Belfast, ME), January 22, 1847, p. 4, col. 1.

48. "The Mechanic," *Daily American Eagle* (Boston, MA), February 13, 1845, p. 1, col. 1. This is one of the few labor poems to adopt the voice of a laborer, speaking in first person.

49. John Greenleaf Whittier, *Songs of Labor, and Other Poems* (Boston: Ticknor, Reed, and Fields, 1851), 47.

50. F. W. Grayson, "The Heroism of Labor," *Daily Alton* (IL) *Telegraph*, July 21, 1854, p. 2, col. 1; *Ellsworth* (ME) *Herald*, November 4, 1854, p. 1, col. 3.

51. "To Mechanics, and Other Working Men," *Maine Workingmen's Advocate* (Belfast, ME), August 9, 1832, p. 4, col. 1.

52. "Labor," *Schenectady* (NY) *Cabinet*, February 1, 1848, p. 1, col. 4.

53. "Free Soil Rouser," *Freeman's Banner* (Schenectady, NY), November 2, 1848, p. 1, col. 1. Though itself a campaign poem, this poem follows one subgenre of the noncampaign labor poem, where the professions are cataloged in order to make puns on their long-term benefit to the republic. See, for example, "Mechanics' Song," *Perry County* (OH) *Democrat* November 8, 1849, p. 4, col. 1.

54. Robin P. Hoople, "'Chants Democratic and Native American': A Neglected Sequence in the Growth of *Leaves of Grass*," *American Literature* 42, no. 2 (May 1970): 186.

55. See, for instance, "Labor," *Winnisimmet Chronicle and Chelsea Advertiser* (Chelsea, MA), September 18, 1847, p. 1, cols. 1–3.

56. Larson, *Whitman's Drama of Consensus*, 235.

57. Dorothy M-T Gregory, "The Celebration of Nativity: 'Broad-Axe Poem,'" *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 2, no. 1 (1984): 6.

58. *Brooklyn* (NY) *Daily Eagle,* October 1, 1849, p. 1, col. 1.

59. J. G. Holland, "The Modern Patriot," *Springfield* (MA) *Daily Republican*, July 5, 1856, p. 1, col. 5.

60. Klammer, *Whitman, Slavery, and the Emergence of "Leaves of Grass*," 40–1.

61. See, for instance, "Mr. Buchanan Perplexed," *Caledonian* (St. Johnsbury, VT), November 29, 1856, p. 2, col. 2. Hollis points out that Edward Grier, in his introduction to the tract, draws a parallel between the catalogs in *The Eighteenth Presidency!* and in *Leaves of Grass*: C. Carroll Hollis, *Language and Style in "Leaves of Grass"* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 21.

62. Whitman, *The Eighteenth Presidency!*, 32.

63. Indeed, "Beecher's Bibles" (i.e., rifles) and other motifs filled Northern Democratic satiric treatment of the free-state settlers. See, for instance, "Bibles and Sharps Rifles," *Paw Paw* (MI) *Free Press*, July 14, 1856, p. 1, col. 3.

64. "True Men of the South," *Michigan Expositor* (Adrian, MI), October 4, 1856, p. 1, col. 1.

65. John Pierpont, "Ruffian's Rally," *Indiana American* (Brookville, IN), August 22, 1856, p. 1, col. 1.

66. "If We Believe, We Shall Act," *Newark* (NJ) *Daily Advertiser*, August 19, 1856, p. 2, col. 1.

67. "The Coming Crisis," *Independent Democrat* (Concord, NH), May 31, 1855, p. 2, col. 1.

68. "Freedom or Slavery," *Hampshire Gazette* (Northampton, MA), October 21, 1856, p. 2, col. 1.

69. Charles W. Upham, "The Present State of Parties: An Address," *Salem* (MA) *Register*, April 28, 1856, p. 2, col. 1.

70. "A Word with the Young Men," *Portland* (ME) *Daily Advertiser*, October 29, 1856, p. 2, col. 1.

71. "Fourth Course—Lecture I," "The Old World and the New," *Caledonian* (St. Johnsbury, VT), November 10, 1855, p. 2, col. 3.

72. "Mr. Seward's Speech," *Northern Home Journal* (Gardiner, ME), March 11, 1858, p. 2, col. 1; *Gazette and Courier* (Greenfield, MA), March 22, 1858, p. 1, col. 6.

73. "Free Labor," *Independent Republican* (Montrose, PA), July 10, 1856, p. 1, col. 1.

74. "The Question," *Boston* (MA) *Evening Telegraph*, March 22, 1856, p. 2, col. 1.

75. "The Duty of Free-working Men," *New-York Reformer* (Watertown, NY), August 28, 1856, p. 1, col. 3. This piece's definition of labor as a transmittable bequest is anticipated by Whitman's Free Soil editorial, where he calls for barring slavery from the territories for the sake of "that heritage of getting bread by the sweat of the brow, which we must leave to our children" ("American Workingmen, Versus Slavery," *Brooklyn* [NY] *Daily Eagle*, September 1, 1847, p. 2, col. 1).

Chapter 3

1. Erkkila, *Whitman the Political Poet*, 133.

2. George B. Forgie, *Patricide in the House Divided: A Psychological Interpretation of Lincoln and His Age* (New York: Norton, 1979).

3. "An Appeal," *Republican Watchman* (Monticello, NY), October 15, 1856, p. 2, col. 3.

4. "Disunion," *Jackson* (MI) *Patriot*, June 25, 1856, p. 2, col. 1.

5. Rollo G. Silver, "Whitman in 1850: Three Uncollected Articles," *American Literature* 19, no. 4 (January 1948): 303.

6. "An Appeal," *Republican Watchman* (Monticello, NY), October 15, 1856, p. 2, col. 3.

7. "Republican Song—Rally for Freemen," *Harrisburg* (PA) *Weekly Telegraph*, October 9, 1856, p. 3, col. 1.

8. "Fremont and Victory," *Marietta* (OH) *Intelligencer*, October 9, 1856, p. 1, col. 4. This sentiment was common. See, for instance, a couplet in "A Song for the Times": "Was't for this our fathers fought? / Did they bleed and die for nought?" (*Burlington* (VT) *Free Press*, September 5, 1856, p. 1, col. 1).

9. Platt Potter, "Sentiments of an Old Democrat," *Albany* (NY) *Evening Journal*, July 18, 1856, p. 2, col. 1.

10. R. M. A., "A Nation's Choice," *Independent Democrat* (Concord, NH), August 21, 1856, p. 1, col. 1.

11. *An Address to the Electors of Connecticut*, March 1857, p. 1, col. 4.

12. *Gettysburg* (PA) *Star*, October 25, 1831, p. 3, col. 1.

13. Michael A. Morrison, *Slavery and the American West: The Eclipse of Manifest Destiny and the Coming of the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 56–7.

14. Kelly Anspaugh, "I Been There Before": Biblical Typology and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*," *ANQ* 7, no. 4 (October 1994): 220.

15. Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 24.

16. Sacvan Bercovitch, "The Typology of America's Mission," *American Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (June 1978): 153–4.

17. Ursula Brumm, *American Thought and Religious Typology,* trans. John Hoaglund (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970), 27.

18. Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (Toronto: Academic Press Canada, 1982), 80–1.

19. The piece from which these words are taken gives a particularly rigorous formulation of the present generation's obligation to determine the meaning of the Revolution. "Republican Ratification Meeting," *Hornellsville* (NY) *Tribune*, July 24, 1856, p. 2, col. 2.

20. "The Great Issue," *Miami* (OH) *Visitor*, August 1, 1855, p. 2, col. 1.

21. Marshall S. Pike, "We Are the Sons of Freedom," *Boston* (MA) *Daily Bee*, November 4, 1856, p. 1, col. 7.

22. "The Fourth," *New York Daily Tribune*, July 1, 1854, p. 4, col. 3.

23. By a Lady, "The Old Thirteen," *Battle Creek* (MI) *Journal*, July 11, 1856, p. 2, col. 4.

24. Frye, *The Great Code*, 84–5.

25. "Our Candidate," *Buffalo* (NY) *Daily Republic*, July 19, 1856, p. 3, col. 3; *Marysville* (OH) *Tribune*, September 24, 1856, p. 2, col. 7. The phrasing varies slightly in these two printings of this poem.

26. *Sons of Liberty in 1776 and 1856* (New York: H. S. Taylor, 1856), 8.

27. "The Coming Crisis," *Independent Democrat* (Concord, NH), May 31, 1855, p. 2, col. 1.

28. N. P. Banks, "Great Meeting in Independence Square," *Daily Evening Bulletin* (Philadelphia, PA), October 7, 1856, p. 3, col. 2; "Progress vs. Conservatism," *Weekly Belleville* (IL) *Advocate*, August 27, 1856, p. 2, col. 1.

29. Major L. Wilson, *Space, Time, and Freedom: The Quest for Nationality and the Irrepressible Conflict, 1815–1861* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1974), 185–210. Wilson's argument is nuanced, and at times he emphasizes that the political antislavery movement demanded a repetition of the Revolution (200).

30. This is in part a reference to the ordinance of 1784 prohibiting slavery prospectively in new states. Taking the ordinance as equivalent to other stages in the nation's founding was even more common in the years leading up to the 1856 Republican campaign, and it often fed into the kind of typological vision Whitman promotes here; see, for instance, "The Convention," *Cleveland* (OH) *Morning Leader*, July 17, 1854, p. 2, col. 1. At times Republicans would attribute to Jefferson himself their own party's reading of the relationship between the Revolution and the present day: "In [Jefferson's] estimation the battles of the Revolution were fought in vain—nothing worth having could be realized—if Slavery was to continue as a moral and political ulcer upon the vitals of the model republic." ("Modern Democracy," *Warren* (PA) *Mail*, April 19, 1856, p. 2, col. 1).

31. "Verdict of the Undaunted Democracy of the Empire State in Behalf of the Jeffersonian Ordinance," *Brooklyn* (NY) *Daily Eagle*, November 4, 1847, p. 2, col. 1.

32. "Speech of John P. Hale," *Portland* (ME) *Daily Advertiser*, August 26, 1854, p. 2, col. 5.

33. Henry Ward Beecher, "Henry Ward Beecher and an American Party" *Oneida* (NY) *Sachem*, February 3, 1855, p. 2, col. 1.

34. Wilson, *Space, Time, and Freedom*, 210, 144.

35. See, for instance, the resolutions endorsing and echoing Senator Fish's hesitant acceptance of the Compromise (untitled, *Corning* (NY) *Journal*, July 16, 1851, p. 2, col. 2). This rhetorical posture continued in polemics against the Republican party mid-decade ("The Louisville Riot—The Dangers of Ultraism," *Buffalo* (NY) *Courier*, August 9, 1855, p. 2, col. 1).

36. "Position of the Seward-Greeley Party," *Vergennes* (VT) *Independent*, July 6, 1854, p. 2, col. 1.

37. "The Kansas Resolutions in the Western Conference," *New York Evening Post*, July 15, 1856, p. 2, col. 5.

38. "Josiah Quincy on Doughfaces," *The Tioga County* [PA] *Agitator*, January 18, 1855, p. 2, col. 1.

39. Ivy G. Wilson, *Specters of Democracy: Blackness and the Aesthetics of Politics in the Antebellum U.S.* (London: Oxford University Press, 2011), 8.

40. Klammer, *Whitman, Slavery, and the Emergence of "Leaves of Grass,"* 108.

41. John Greenleaf Whittier, *Anti-Slavery Poems: Songs of Labor and Reform* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1888), 170.

42. Anson Burlingame, "Republicanism in Germantown," *Evening Bulletin* (Philadelphia, PA), August 27, 1856, p. 2, col. 1.

43. Charles P. Shiras, "The Bloodhound's Song," *Old Colony Reporter* (North Bridgewater, MA), December 13, 1850, p. 1, col. 2.

44. Whittier, *Anti-Slavery Poems*, 170–1.

45. "An Appeal to Freemen," *The Republican Prize Songster* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Republican Club, 1856), 12.

46. This reading runs parallel to M. Wynn Thomas's interpretation of the poem's "reversed and parodic millenarianism" that in turn reverses itself to become "authentic apocalypse." See *Transatlantic Connections: Whitman U.S., Whitman U.K.* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2005), 53.

47. This anecdote was first published in the years after the War of 1812 but had a revival of sorts in the early 1850s. "A Yankee Captain," *Bath* (ME) *Eastern Times*, December 5, 1850, p. 4, col. 2; *Rome* (NY) *Sentinel*, February 12, 1851, p. 1, col. 8.

48. William Cullen Bryant, "The Battle-Field," in *Poems* (Dessau, Germany: Katz Brothers, 1854), 223.

49. "The Cry of the Oppressed!," *Springfield* (MA) *Daily Republican,* May 31, 1856, p. 2, col. 5.

50. "The Union," *Philadelphia* (PA) *Evening Bulletin,* October 13, 1856, p. 1, col. 5.

51. William Henry Burleigh, ed., *The Republican Campaign Songster for 1860* (New York: H. Dayton, 1860), 33; George W. Bungay, *Nebraska: A Poem, Personal and Political* (Boston: John P. Jewett, 1854), 16.

52. "The Great Question," *Weekly Transcript* (North Adams, MA), August 16, 1855, p. 2, col. 2.

53. Nathaniel Banks, "Speaker Banks on Local Politics," *New-York Daily Times,* October 28, 1856, p. 2, col. 5.

54. Walt Whitman, *The Early Poems and the Fiction,* ed. Thomas L. Brasher (New York: New York University Press, 1963), 45. Whitman's charge here was taken up by Republican campaign poetry right up to the 1860 campaign. See, for instance, the fourth stanza of "Honest Abe," *The Republican Campaign Songster for 1860*, 22.

55. "The Freemen's Rallying Song," *Daily Commercial* (Cincinnati, OH), October 4, 1856, p. 1, col. 4.

56. "Speech of Hon. Henry Wilson at the Young Men's Ratification Convention in Worcester, September 8, 1857," *Massachusetts Spy* (Worcester, MA), October 1, 1857, p. 1, col. 5.

Chapter 4

1. "Our Cause—Our Champion," *Lansing* (MI) *State Republican,* October 28, 1856, p. 2, col. 4.

2. See, for instance, "Song," *National Republican and Political Register* (Cincinnati, OH), October 24, 1828, p. 1, col. 4.

3. For a piece that illustrates particularly vividly how the trope could offer a complete vision of the people's coming into their power, while remaining ostensibly about rallying alone, see "The People in their Might! A Great and Glorious Meeting of Fifty Thousand Freemen," *Republican Banner* (Gettysburg, PA), April 1, 1834, p. 1, col. 4.

4. Thomas, *Transatlantic Connections,* 47. Free Democrats, especially through their important organ the *Worcester Spy*, took on the project of satirizing a posturing spontaneity that was distinct from the real version.

5. The martial metaphors in early-nineteenth-century patriotic poetry influenced and were absorbed into the party thronging poems. See, for instance, Peter Quince, "The Ghost of Warren, or the Patriotic Resolve: A Patriotic Song," in *A Parnassian Shop, Opened in the Pindaric Style* (Boston: Russell and Cutler, 1801), 124–6. Another historian who has stressed the importance of "martial images" to particularly Democratic culture before, during, and after the Civil War is Jean H. Baker, *Affairs of Party: The Political Culture of Northern Democrats in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 287–91.

6. Cedric de Leon, "Vicarious Revolutionaries: Martial Discourse and the Origins of Mass Party Competition in the United States, 1789–1848," *Studies in American Political Development* 24, no. 1 (April 2010): 121.

7. De Leon, "Vicarious Revolutionaries," 125, 126.

8. De Leon, "Vicarious Revolutionaries," 128, 138.

9. Rev. John Leland, "Bank and People," *Cortland* (NY) *Democrat*, June 30, 1840, p. 2, col. 2; *Sandy-Hill* (NY) *Herald*, July 10, 1838, p. 2, col. 1.

10. "Whig Mass Meeting to Be Held at Newark," *Whig Battering Ram* (Columbus, OH), August 30, 1844, p. 4, col. 2.

11. "The Bunker Hill Convention," *Boston* (MA) *Atlas*, September 11, 1840, p. 2, col. 2.

12. "Watchman! How Goes the Night?" *Steuben* (NY) *Farmer's Advocate*, August 22, 1838, p. 2, col. 3.

13. "The Triumph of the Free," [Wellsboro, PA] *Tioga Eagle*, June 17, 1840, p. 3, col. 1. A Whig thronging poem from the same campaign employs much the same narrative, but the fathers' voice is channeled through the allegorical figure "Fair Liberty" (untitled poem, *Marietta* [OH] *Gazette,* August 8, 1840, p. 1, col. 1).

14. "Arouse to Victory," *Eastern Argus* (Portland, ME), October 22, 1840, p. 3, col. 2.

15. "Authority of Congress over Free Territories," *Freeman's Banner* (Schenectady, NY), August 11, 1848, p. 2, col. 3.

16. "Democratic Ode," *Democratic Standard* (Delaware, OH), August 3, 1848, p. 1, col. 4.

17. "The Value of a Single Vote," *Auburn* (NY) *Free Press*, October 31, 1832, p. 2, col. 2.

18. "The Democratic Rally," *Niagara Democrat and Lockport Balance*

(Lockport, NY), June 10, 1840, p. 1, col. 3; *Tiago* (PA) *Eagle*, May 20, 1840, p. 1, col. 1.

19. Steven Jones, "'Choose Reform or Civil War': Shelley, the English Revolution, and the Problem of Succession," *Wordsworth Circle* 25, no. 3 (Summer 1994): 148.

20. "Free-Soil Gathering," *The Free Soil Minstrel* (New York: Martyn and Ely, 1848), 28.

21. A. Warren Stearns, "The Free Soil Voter's Song," *The Free Soil Minstrel,* 11. In some versions of this song, the chorus containing the refrain "we are all free soilers" is omitted (*Freeman's Banner* [Schenectady, NY], October 5, 1848, p. 1, col. 1).

22. See, for instance, "Whig Song," *Old Zack!* (Columbus, OH), September 2, 1848, p. 1, col. 1.

23. Whigs at times managed to marry this ideal to their own ideological version of a class-blurring convergence, that is, a harmony of interests: "Up Yankee boys, and Southrons come / From gilded hall and humble home." ("On to the Battle, Freemen!" *Ovid* (NY) *Bee*, October 25, 1848, p. 1, col. 1).

24. "Ode—The Watchword," *Independent Republican* (Goshen, NY), April 5, 1844, p. 1, col. 1.

25. "Fremont and Liberty," *Cleveland* (OH) *Morning Leader*, July 31, 1856, p. 4, col. 1.

26. "A Song for Buck and Breck," *Manitowoc* (WI) *Herald,* August 16, 1856, p. 1, col. 5. "A Song for Cass and Butler," *Albany Argus*, October 9, 1848, p. 2, col. 1. Some Democratic poems employed the martial motif without including any of the specifically thronging elements. See "Democratic Battle Hymn," *The Boston Post*, August 22, 1856, p. 1, col. 6.

27. William Henry Burleigh, "Up for the Conflict," *Republican Campaign Songster for 1860,* 6.

28. "Shouting from the Hill-Top," *Morning Register* (Sandusky, OH), August 1, 1856, p. 3, col. 2.

29. On one page of the major free-state Kansas newspaper, three such poems conveniently appear: "Song of the Kansas Emigrants," "The Freemen's Song," and Whittier's "The Kansas Emigrant's Song," *Herald of Freedom* (Lawrence, KA), October 21, 1854, p. 1.

30. *Burlington* (VT) *Free Press*, February 23, 1855, p. 1, col. 2; *Washington*

County People's Journal (Greenwich, NY), March 8, 1855, p. 1, col. 1; *Salem* (MA) *Register*, February 8, 1855, p. 1, col. 4.

31. Charles S. Weyman, "Fremont and Victory," *City Advertiser* (Charleston, MA), September 17, 1856, p. 1, col. 3.

32. "Free-Soil Song," *New-York Daily Tribune*, October 22, 1856, p. 3, col. 4. For a poem in a similar vein, see "Vox Populi," *Providence* (RI) *Daily Journal*, October 22, 1856, p. 1, col. 8.

33. Untitled, *Boston* (MA) *Daily Atlas*, September 22, 1856, p. 1, col. 7.

34. George Shepard Burleigh, *Signal Fires on the Trail of the Pathfinder* (New York: Dayton and Burdick, 1856), 135.

35. "The Campaign Opened," *Fremont* (OH) *Journal*, June 27, 1856, p. 2, col. 5

36. "Come at Your Country's Call!" *Boston* (MA) *Daily Atlas*, September 25, 1856, p. 1, col. 7.

37. "O, What Is That Sound," *The Fremont Songster* (New York: H. S. Riggs, 1856), 21.

38. "A Hymn of Freedom," *Boston* (MA) *Daily Atlas*, September 25, 1856, p. 1, col. 7.

39. "Sectional Strife," *Ohio State Journal* (Columbus, OH), July 29, 1854, p. 2, col. 1.

40. "We Are in the Midst of a Revolution!" *New-York Daily Tribune*, May 10, 1854, p. 4, col. 3. This clarion call was widely republished, for instance, in the *Schenectady Cabinet*, May 16, 1854, p. 2, col. 3, and the *Warren* (PA) *Mail*, May 18, 1854, p. 2, col. 4.

41. "We Are in the Midst of a Revolution!" p. 4, col. 3.

42. "The Boom of Ruffian Democracy," *Cleveland* (OH) *Morning Leader*, September 30, 1856, p. 2, col. 2.

43. Edward D. Howard, "A Song for the Crisis," *Cleveland* (OH) *True Democrat*, September 14, 1848, p. 3, col. 1.

44. "The Buffalo Convention," *The Free Soil Minstrel*, 224.

45. "Squints toward a Re-Formation of Parties," *People's Journal* (Greenwich, NY), June 8, 1854, p. 2, col. 3, col. 4.

46. "Gathering of the Elements," *Cleveland* (OH) *Morning Leader*, July 14, 1856, p. 2, col. 2.

47. "Slavery—Past and Present," *Tioga* (PA) *Agitator*, November 1, 1855, p. 1, col. 4.

48. "The American Party," *Caledonian* (St. Johnsbury, VT), August 11, 1855, p. 2, col. 2.

49. Untitled, *Boston* (MA) *Daily Atlas*, September 26, 1856, p. 1, col. 5.

50. "Great Anti-Nebraska Convention," *The Ohio Repository*, March 29, 1854, p. 2, col. 6.

51. "The Campaign of Fifty-Six," *Middlesex* (CT) *Explorer*, August 28, 1856, p. 1, col. 1.

52. Very rarely one sees something close to that inclusiveness in the party poems, for instance, in "The Freemen's Song," *Buffalo* (NY) *Morning Express*, July 24, 1856, p. 3, col. 1.

53. Though it was not common, occasionally thronging poems would posit a journeyer who, before taking up new duties toward it, celebrates the land (in this poem the allegorical figure Columbia): "the Democrat loves / Every blade of thy grass and each flower" ("Freedom's Call," *Steuben* (NY) *Farmers' Advocate*, October 18, 1840, p. 1, col. 4).

54. To be sure, this passage also echoes the era's common calls for rejuvenation in country air ("Change of Air," *Troy* [NY] *Whig*, August 10, 1848, p. 2, col. 4; "Necessity of Change of Air," *Spirit of the Times* [Batavia, NY], October 9, 1849, p. 1, col. 7; *Whig Press* [Middletown, NY], November 23, 1853, p. 1, col. 1), though Whitman's emphasis on the tools rather than the places of work weakens the echo.

55. *Republican Prize Songster*, 87. Party antislavery borrowed this figure from the second party system. For Whig, anti-Masonic, and Democratic examples, see "The Election," *Oneida Whig* (Utica, NY), October 29, 1839, p. 2, col. 1; untitled, *Cayuga Republican* (Auburn, NY), September 12, 1832, p. 2, col. 2; "Freemen of New-York," *Albany* (NY) *Argus,* October 31, 1840, p. 2, col. 2.

56. "Freedom's Ball," *Northampton* (MA) *Courier*, September 16, 1856, p. 1, col. 3.

57. "Reasons Why All Should Vote THE DEMOCRATIC TICKET," *Appleton* (WI) *Crescent*, Nov. 1, 1856, p. 2, col. 3. While this slogan was associated with patriotic compromise, antislavery parties often made defensive gestures to it. See, for instance, the third plank of the Massachusetts Free Soil party in 1851 ("Resolutions Adopted at the Free Soil State Convention," *Boston* (MA) *Daily Atlas*, September 18, 1851, p. 1, col. 6).

58. Edward D. Howard, "A Song for the Crisis," *Cleveland* (OH) *True*

Democrat, September 14, 1848, p. 3, col. 1; *National Era* (Washington, DC), August 31, 1848, p. 4, col. 2; *Campaign of 1848: Free Soil Songs for the People* (Boston: n.p., 1848), 21.

59. Howard, "A Song for the Crisis."

60. Harold Aspiz, "Whitman's 'Poem of the Road,'" *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 12, no. 3 (Winter 1995): 174.

61. "The Footsteps of the People," *Troy* (NY) *Daily Whig*, June 6, 1838, p. 2, cols. 2–3.

62. C. Carroll Hollis, *Language and Style in "Leaves of Grass,"* 118; Thomas, *Transatlantic Connections,* 94.

63. Aspiz, "Whitman's 'Poem of the Road,'" 179.

64. Salmon P. Chase, *Maintain Plighted Faith* (Washington, DC: Congressional Globe Office, 1854), 4.

65. "National Free Democratic Platform," *Herald of Freedom* (Wilmington, OH), October 22, 1852, p.2, cols. 5–6.

66. Edward Wade, "Slavery Question," *Appendix to the Congressional Globe*, 34th Congress, 1st Sess. August 2, 1856, 1079. Earlier in the year, John Hale had similarly put the doctor-patient metaphor to satiric purposes: "The Speech of Senator Hale," *Detroit* (MI) *Daily Advertiser*, January 19, 1856, p. 2, col. 2.

67. "Speech of Chas. Durkee," *Wisconsin Free Democrat* (Milwaukee, WI), September 1, 1852, p. 3, col. 1.

68. "Sectionalism," *Lansing* (MI) *State Republican*, November 13, 1855, p. 2, col. 1.

69. "Speech of Chas. Durkee," *Wisconsin Free Democrat*, September 1, 1852, p. 3, col. 1.

70. Rev. J. Raines Rabkin, "A Fremont Song," *St. Lawrence Republican* (Ogdensburg, NY), August 12, 1856, p. 1, col. 2.

71. Mr. Sumner, "The Fugitive Slave Law," *Appendix to the Congressional Globe,* 32nd Congress, 1st session, August 26, 1852, 1103.

72. "Those Noble Old Statesmen," *The Fremont Songster* (New York: H. S. Riggs, 1856), 20. This passage was lifted from an 1840 Whig poem, "Old Tip," *Guernsey Times* (Cambridge, OH), March 28, 1840, p. 3, col. 1.

73. "Song of Freedom," *New-York Daily Tribune*, July 9, 1856, p. 3, col. 6.

74. Patricia A. Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 8.

75. Untitled poem, *Marietta* (OH) *Gazette,* August 8, 1840, p. 1, col. 1.

76. Thomas Corwin, "Election of Speaker," *Appendix to the Congressional Globe*, 36th Congress, 1st session, March 7, 1860, 149.

77. Whittier, *The Panorama and Other Poems*, 13; untitled, *Boston* (MA) *Daily Atlas*, September 22, 1856, p. 1, col. 7.

78. Aspiz has examined some of the ambiguities and gaps in communication at the poem's conclusion: "Whitman's 'Poem of the Road,'" 181–2.

79. "The Great National Convention," *Huron* (OH) *Reflector*, May 19, 1840, p. 1, col. 2.

Chapter 5

1. Graham Alexander Peck, "Abraham Lincoln and the Triumph of an Antislavery Nationalism," *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* 28, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 1.

2. Peck, "Abraham Lincoln and the Triumph," 5. Susan-Mary Grant, *North over South: Northern Nationalism and American Identity in the Antebellum Era* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2000).

3. Michael E. Woods, *Emotional and Sectional Conflict in the Antebellum United States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 26. For an earlier historical discussion of this tradition, see Paul C. Nagel, *One Nation Indivisible: The Union in American Thought, 1776–1861* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 70–2.

4. Coviello, *Intimacy in America*, 4.

5. Woods, *Emotional and Sectional Conflict*, 26–7.

6. For more light on the complex divisions within the Whig party in the North on such questions, see Robert F. Dalzell, *Daniel Webster and the Trial of American Nationalism, 1843–1852* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973); and Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 459–725.

7. Joseph Michael Sommers, "*Godey's Lady's Book*: Sarah Hale and the Construction of Sentimental Nationalism," *College Literature* 37, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 50.

8. Tobias Menely, "Acts of Sympathy: Abolitionist Poetry and Transatlantic Identification," in *Affect and Abolition in the Anglo-Atlantic, 1770–*

1830, ed. Stephen Ahern (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013), 53.

9. Menely, "Acts of Sympathy," 57.

10. "The Republican Platform," *Battle Creek* (MI) *Journal*, October 10, 1856, p. 2, col. 4.

11. Untitled, *Boston* (MA) *Daily Atlas*, September 27, 1856, p. 1, col. 8.

12. Rogan Kersh, *Dreams of a More Perfect Union* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 53.

13. M. Wynn Thomas, "Whitman and the Dreams of Labor," 139–43.

14. David S. Reynolds, "'Affection Shall Solve Every One of the Problems of Freedom': Calamus Love and the Antebellum Political Crisis," *Huntingdon Library Quarterly* 73, no. 4 (December 2010): 641.

15. Jay Grossman, "'The Evangel-Poem of Comrades and of Love': Revising Whitman's Republicanism," *American Transcendental Quarterly* 4, no. 3 (September 1990): 207.

16. Michael Millner, "The Fear Passing the Love of Women: Sodomy and Male Sentimental Citizenship in the Antebellum City," *Arizona Quarterly* 58, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 20.

17. Coviello, *Intimacy in America*, 3.

18. John Mac Kilgore, *Mania for Freedom: American Literatures of Enthusiasm from the Revolution to the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 169.

19. Kilgore, *Mania for Freedom*, 169.

20. The Republican reflections on this matter are too numerous to cite, but some typical examples that focus on the role of the Democratic party in this shift are "The Democratic Party in 1848 and 1856," *Portland* (ME) *Advertiser*, August 27, 1856, p. 2, col. 2; "Democracy in Former Times," *North American and United States Gazette* (Philadelphia, PA), September 13, 1856, p. 2, col. 2; and "The Old and the New," *Chicago* (IL) *Democrat*, May 17, 1856, p. 2, cols. 1–2.

21. See Robert J. Cook, *Baptism of Fire: The Republican Party in Iowa, 1838–1878* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1994). See also Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 153–4.

22. "A General Survey—The Duties of the Friends of Freedom," *National Era* (Washington, DC), January 23, 1851, p. 14, col. 4.

23. "Speech of James B. Clay," *M'connelsville* (OH) *Weekly Enquirer*, August 21, 1856, p. 1, col. 4. For examples of more elaborately worked out

descriptions of the Union as a structure demanding compromise, see, for instance, "The Republic," *Litchfield* (CT) *Republican*, July 6, 1854, p. 2, col. 4; and "To the Polls," *Maquoketa* (IA) *Sentinel*, October 30, 1856, p. 2, col. 2.

24. "Mr. Webster's Reply to the Boston Address," *Daily Free Press* (Burlington, VT), April 15, 1850, p. 2, col. 2.

25. "The Democracy of Luzerne County," *Pennsylvanian* (Philadelphia, PA), March 12, 1850, p. 2, col. 1. The definitive statement of the bond of the "compact" came first not from a Democrat but from Edward Everett, whose notorious Message to the Massachusetts Legislature in 1836 claimed that "every thing that tends to disturb the relations created by this compact is at war with its spirit" ("Abstain from Discussion!" *Liberator* (Boston, MA), January 23, 1836, p. 2, col. 4).

26. Kenneth Raynor, "Know-Nothing Convention in Philadelphia," *New-York Daily Times*, June 9, 1855, pp. 1–2, col. 6, col. 1.

27. E. K. Foster, "Great Union Meeting in New Haven," *New Haven* (CT) *Journal and Courier*, December 27, 1850, p. 2, col. 5.

28. "Mr. Webster in Boston," *Daily Free Press* (Burlington, VT), May 2, 1850, p. 2, col. 2; "Mr. Webster's Reception at Boston," *Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, DC), May 3, 1850, p. 2, col. 6.

29. "The Democratic Convention," *Newark* (NJ) *Daily Advertiser*, August 7, 1856, p. 2, col. 2.

30. Untitled, [Philadelphia] *Daily Morning Times*, June 21, 1855, p. 2, col. 1.

31. "Seward-Republicanism," *Democratic Review* (Washington, DC), January 1856, 26.

32. "The Union to the Bay State," *Boston* (MA) *Post*, October 28, 1856, p. 4, col. 1.

33. "D. D. Barnum's Letter," *Boston Evening Traveler*, July 31, 1856, p. 4, col. 5; "Letter from Hon. Rufus Choate," *Machias* (ME) *Union*, August 26, 1856, p. 1, col. 5.

34. "Salt River Chorus," *The Free Soil Minstrel*, ed. George Washington Clark (New York: Martin and Ely, 1848), 20.

35. "To the Free Soil Democracy of Northern Ohio," *Morning True Democrat* (Cleveland, OH), October 13, 1848, p. 2, col. 3.

36. " Freedom and Union," *Republican Prize Songster*, p. 34.

37. "The Charge of Sectionalism Refuted," *Philadelphia* (PA) *North-American and Gazette*, December 15, 1856, p. 2, col. 1.

38. Charles Brown, "The Integrity of the Union: The Voice of the Democracy," *Pennsylvanian* (Philadelphia, PA), February 23, 1850 p. 2, col. 2.

39. "The Future of Our Country—Will the Union be Preserved?" *Michigan Expositor* (Jonesville, MI), June 24, 1854, p. 2, col. 3.

40. "Speech of Hon. C. H. Peaslee, at the Democratic State Convention," *New Hampshire Gazette* (Portsmouth, NH), July 1, 1851, p. 1, col. 3.

41. Grossman, "The Evangel-Poem of Comrades and of Love," 210.

42. G. M. Dallas, "A New Political Movement," *Eastern State Journal* (White Plains, NY), November 24, 1854, p. 4, cols. 4–5.

43. "Speech of the Honorable D. S. Dickinson, at Buffalo, September 9th," *Appleton* (WI) *Crescent*, October 4, 1856, p. 1, col. 5.

44. Rev. Dr. Cummings, "The Union," *Home Journal* (New York, NY), May 25, 1850, p. 4, col. 2.

45. "The Democratic Convention," *Newark* (NJ) *Daily Advertiser*, August 7, 1856, p. 2, col. 2.

46. "The North and the South," *Boston* (MA) *Daily Atlas*, September 16, 1850, p. 2, col. 1. This article was reprinted in newspapers with similar leanings, for instance, the *St. Albans* (VT) *Messenger*, September 26, 1850, p. 2, cols. 2–3.

47. "Some Reflections on the Past, and for the Future," *Brooklyn* (NY) *Daily Eagle*, November 3, 1847, p. 2, col. 1.

48. Coviello, *Intimacy in America*, 129.

49. Forgie, *Patricide in the House Divided*, 89–199.

50. "Union Savers versus Union Breakers," *Pittsfield* (MA) *Sun*, August 4, 1853, p. 2, col. 4.

51. "Buchanan and the Union," *Lawrence* (MA) *Sentinel*, August 2, 1856, p. 1, col. 2.

52. "The Union," *Groton* (MA) *Mercury*, June 1851, p. 1, col. 1.

53. Coviello, *Intimacy in America*, 6.

54. "Union of the North," *Independent Standard* (Irasburgh, VT), March 28, 1856, p. 2, col. 1.

55. "The Compromise Bill," *New Hampshire Gazette* (Portsmouth, NH), June 4, 1850, p. 2, col. 1.

56. *Keene* (NH) *Sentinel*, quoted in "Free Democracy and Whiggery," *Rockingham Messenger* (Portsmouth, NH), April 13, 1853, p. 2, col. 1.

57. "'We Will Subdue You.'" *Independent Republican* (Montrose, PA),

May 29, 1856, p. 2, col. 3.

58. "The Dirge of the Doughface," *Republican Campaign Songster*, 16.

59. G. M. Dallas, "A New Political Movement," *Eastern State Journal* (White Plains, NY), November 24, 1854 p. 4, cols. 4–5.

60. "Republican State Convention," *Ballston Journal* (Ballston Spa, NY), September 29, 1857, p. 1, col. 2.

61. "The Separation at Philadelphia—The Duty of the North to Unite," *Springfield* (MA) *Republican,* July 13, 1855, p. 2, col. 2.

62. "Union Saving," *Tribune and Telegraph* (Kenosha, WI), August 2, 1855, p. 2, col. 2.

63. "THE OLD GAME—PRO-SLAVERY TACTICS," *Lansing* (MI) *State Republican*, September 4, 1855, p. 2, col. 1.

64. "A Republican State Convention," *Pontiac* (MI) *Gazette*, July 28, 1856, p. 2, col. 2.

65. Elizabeth Fenton and Valerie Rohy, "Whitman, Lincoln, and the Union of Men," *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* 55, no. 3–4 (2009): 237–8.

66. Kersh, *Dreams of a More Perfect Union*, 191.

Conclusion

1. "Our Flag Is There!" *Pontiac* (MI) *Gazette*, June 28, 1856, p. 2, col. 1.

2. "Friends of Freedom!" *Bradford* (PA) *Reporter*, October 6, 1855, p. 2, col. 3.

3. J. G. A. Pocock, *Politics, Language, and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (New York: Atheneum, 1971), 85.

4. Jason Frank makes a related point when he argues that in Whitman's poetry "the people are at once the inexhaustible inspiration and the effect of poetic mediation." "Aesthetic Democracy: Walt Whitman and the Poetry of the People," *Review of Politics* 69, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 403.

5. Maire Mullins, "Prophetic Voice and Sacramental Insight in Walt Whitman's 'Messenger Leaves' Poems," *Renascence* 68, no. 4 (Fall 2016): 250.

6. "Endorsing Brooks Sectionally," *Albany* (NY) *Evening Journal*, June 11, 1856, p. 2, col. 2.

7. Michael William Pfau, "Time, Tropes, and Textuality: Reading

Republicanism in Charles Sumner's 'The Crime against Kansas,'" *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 6, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 388, 402.

8. Theodore Sedgwick, *The American Citizen: His True Position, Character, and Duties* (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1847), 17.

9. "A Scape Goat," *Detroit* (MI) *Daily Advertiser*, August 21, 1855, p. 2, col. 1.

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