



Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

**ADVERTIMENT.** L'accés als continguts d'aquesta tesi queda condicionat a l'acceptació de les condicions d'ús establertes per la següent llicència Creative Commons:  [http://cat.creativecommons.org/?page\\_id=184](http://cat.creativecommons.org/?page_id=184)

**ADVERTENCIA.** El acceso a los contenidos de esta tesis queda condicionado a la aceptación de las condiciones de uso establecidas por la siguiente licencia Creative Commons:  <http://es.creativecommons.org/blog/licencias/>

**WARNING.** The access to the contents of this doctoral thesis it is limited to the acceptance of the use conditions set by the following Creative Commons license:  <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/?lang=en>



Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Departament de Traducció, Interpretació i Estudis d'Àsia Oriental

THE FIRST TRANSLATIONS OF WALT WHITMAN'S LEAVES OF GRASS  
INTO CATALAN, FRENCH AND SPANISH:  
THE SPECIAL CASE OF CEBRIÀ MONTOLIU

TESIS DOCTORAL

AUTORA

A Kaiser

DIRECTOR

Francesc Parcerisas i Vázquez

Departament de Traducció, Interpretació i Estudis d'Àsia Oriental

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Bellaterra, June 2017



Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Departament de Traducció, Interpretació i Estudis d'Àsia Oriental

THE FIRST TRANSLATIONS OF WALT WHITMAN'S *LEAVES OF GRASS*  
INTO CATALAN, FRENCH AND SPANISH:  
THE SPECIAL CASE OF CEBRIÀ MONTOLIU

DOCTORAL THESIS

PRESENTED by

A Kaiser

DIRECTED by

Francesc Parcerisas i Vázquez

Signature of the Author

Signature of the Director

Bellaterra, June 2017

*To Cebrià Montoliu and his discreet yawp for the utopia  
of a democratic world.*

## THANKS

I would first of all like to thank my thesis advisor, Francesc Parcerisas, poet, translator and Professor Emeritus at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. He has been a wise and patient guide throughout this multifarious adventure. Eternally inquisitive, he has been interested in what I have been discovering, encouraging me along the way. His knowledge of Catalan history and culture is tremendous and both his facts and often wry opinions on matters, shared with me where we would often meet, in the courtyard at the Ateneu, helped me keep in mind something which is important in daily life as well as in historical research, that is, that the past is many things, including an older version of the present! It was also a pleasure to work with someone who would take the time to meet me on the corner of Diagonal and Passeig de Gracia one morning to pass off to me a power drill - for building more bookshelves, of course.

Endless thanks to the librarians who helped me with this multi-national research project Cebrià Montoliu led me on: from Barcelona to Madrid to Paris to New York, Boston, Fairhope, Kansas City, and, yes, Albuquerque. Despite the physical distance between us, their love for knowledge – and its organization – as well as an innate sleuthing instinct, had them assisting me in unexpectedly generous ways. I was able to discover along with them so much on Montoliu and his world, to say nothing of new avenues of research, both technologically hot off the press and old school. Montoliu, himself a librarian and detailed-oriented archivist would be pleased with their efforts, their sense of knowledge being a publicly-held resource and their dissemination of both the facts and good will. Additionally, I would not be here today were it not also for the treasure trove on all things Whitman, and then some, that is The Walt Whitman Archive.

To colleagues and friends who were there for me, who might have had some doctoral hints to help clear my path; who invited me to email and in-person conversations on my topic, or theirs, and related subject matter; who shared their love of learning with me; who knew a rare and used book bookseller who might have an *a propos* find to advance my research; who have been present, over these years; and those who have more recently appeared, miracles, to help me bring this part of my research to fruition. To all of you who have lent an ear to and asked a question about my ever-evolving project of examining the first translations of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* into French, Catalan and Spanish, with the increasing focus on the fascinating Cebrià Montoliu and the Catalan part of the story. To my family, of course, now more knowledgeable about these topics than they would have ever imagined! Thank you, as always, for being there.

## TABLE of CONTENTS

	Abstract
I.	INTRODUCTION
	1.1 My Interest
	1.2 Methodology
	1.3 Structure
II.	WALT WHITMAN
	2.1 Biography: Whitman's World: Life, Times & Mind
	Historical Moment–Family-Professional Life-Birth of the poet and <i>Leaves of Grass</i> -civil war
	2.2 <i>Leaves of Grass</i> : Reception and Translations
	2.2.1 England, Ireland and Canada
	2.2.2 Italy
	2.2.3 Germany and German-speaking countries
	2.2.4 France
	2.2.5 Spain and Latin America
III.	CEBRIÀ MONTOLIU
	3.1 Biography: Montoliu's World: Life, Times & Mind
	Historical Moment – Family - Professional Life
	3.2 Work on Whitman
	3.2.1 The Poems: <i>Fulles d'Herba</i>
	3.2.2 <i>The Study: Walt Whitman: L'home i sa tasca</i>
	3.2.2.1 The Man
	3.2.2.2 The Work
	3.2.2.2.1 La Pensa Whitmaniana
	3.2.2.2.2 Ètica: Qüestió sexual
	3.2.2.2.3 Política
	3.2.2.2.4 Estètica
	3.2.2.2.5 Art Poètica
	3.2.2.2.6 L'Herència de Whitman
	3.2.2.2.7 Endreça
IV.	CONCLUSIONS
	<i>Bibliography</i>
	<i>Appendices</i>

## ABSTRACT

Cebrià Montoliu was an *urbanista* working in Barcelona when in 1909, his translations of twenty-three of Whitman's poems from *Leaves of Grass* were published, the first Whitman poems translated into Catalan. Four years later, he would publish a critical work on Whitman's oeuvre: *Walt Whitman: L'home i sa tasca* (1913). What was the relationship of this town planner to the social, political, scientific and artistic ebullition in Barcelona at this time? When and how was Montoliu – student of law, multi-lingual librarian, writer, translator and activist - exposed to Whitman? What did Montoliu see in Whitman's work that appealed to him and which he wanted to share? Why did he translate the particular poems he did? What was the objective of the “prolonged” introduction, or critical essay to Whitman's work? What did Montoliu propose in it? Why has this work, more than a century on, never been looked into in any significant manner?

As Founder and Secretary of the Societat Cívica Catalana, la Ciutat Jardí, Montoliu's personal mission was the “garden city”, an idea he found responded to the exponential growth of the urban landscape at the time, and also impossible to advance in a Barcelona beholden to private ownership and interest. A surprising conclusion, given, what would be termed today, the progressive political and social idea sharing and development of the era; development that was spear-headed by people of Montoliu's milieu: the educated and well-off. In 1919, Montoliu, after extensive urban research travels across Europe, left for the US, birthplace of the author of *Leaves of Grass*. Seeking to realize his ideas and ideals, he participated in the “utopian” project, Fairhope (AL), a single-tax community, promoted Hispanic literatures in Boston, taught Spanish in Kansas City, and, in 1923, died in New Mexico while on a road trip west with his partner.

If Walt Whitman could (also) be thought of as the poet recording the US industrial revolution and its effects on cities and the residents of both, can we better understand the interest of Montoliu, and some other translators in Europe at the turn of the twentieth century, with their own cultures' steeped in industrial revolutions, in Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, and their subsequent motivation/s for, in particular, translating the latter within an intense period, from 1908 to 1912, that is, from French (Léon Bazalgette), Catalan (Montoliu), and Spanish (the Uruguayan, Álvaro Armando Vasseur)? How was Montoliu's work on Whitman different from the others? The reception of Whitman and his work, especially outside of the US, the biography of this elusive Cebrià (de) Montoliu – a man of multi-faceted talents - a review of his era and, more specifically, his in-depth study, *Walt Whitman: L'home i sa tasca* will be examined here.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Interest

*Every society brings to literature its own form of expression, and the history of the nations can be told with greater truth by the stages of literature than by chronicles and decades.*

Cuban poet, journalist, and revolutionary, José Martí, in his 1887 homage to Whitman, "El poeta Walt Whitman"<sup>1</sup>

My interest in my topic, in which Walt Whitman, his life and work figure significantly stems from a childhood that contained, concurrently, elements of non-expansiveness and expansiveness. Yes, I contradict myself...that is, books, but little poetry in the house except for some works such as Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, T.S. Eliot and Carl Sandburg, while, at the same time, Emerson's essays were there, as were my parents who instilled in us their belief in a world of possibility both for individuals and for society to develop towards greater equality, justice and opportunity. It seemed to me that Whitman both celebrated the present and maintained as a refrain in *Leaves of Grass* this confidence for the future, and, amid this exaltation, the reader, I, my individual me, was brought into society and woven part and parcel into a fabric of diverse landscapes and variety of other individuals walking about the vast outdoors as well as the city.

As for the poets in the house, I read, like (and read) all three, but found Whitman to contain aspects of the political I did not capture in Dickinson's poetry and to supersede T.S. Eliot in his inclusive approach to spirituality. Of course, Whitman could also entice me, as a ten-year old with a travel bug already well-established, with his call to take to the open road. I felt, as well, included in a poetry that talked of females as equals to males, an attitude that modeled what I saw as a truer democratic society, which in the end, was also a type of precursor for me to choosing political science as my BA and MA degrees. I was attracted to the "society" and

---

<sup>1</sup> Martí, José. "El poeta Walt Whitman." El Partido Liberal (Mexico City), 1887. Accessed June 2015. <http://www.damisela.com/literatura/pais/cuba/autores/marti/proceres/whitman.htm>.



“social” side of Whitman’s poems - perhaps not unlike Cebrià Montoliu himself – and his description of life in a society claiming it was a unique democratic experiment.

Additionally, and very importantly, and in contrast to possible, for example, Mexican-American or Native American perspectives on Whitman, I was not part of a group or tribe of original residents on the land and, as my family had come over to the United States in 1870, or thereabouts, I never felt like a newly-arrived immigrant or considered the readings of Whitman that today have been more vocalized, as in the comment by a Mexican-American after a discussion of Whitman and borders, that Whitman eventually expressed the belief that Mexico and Canada would prove to be natural extensions of the US. What would he think, in fact, of the wall the US government considers on its southern border? Or, of the Mojave poet, also enrolled at Gila River, Natalie Diaz, and her poem “Reservation Grass”, as a possible response to his question “What is the grass?”:

*We smoke more grass than we ever promise to plant...Our front yards are green and brown, triangles of grass—What is the grass?—emeralds and garnets sewed like seeds in the dirt.*<sup>2</sup>

Then, addressing Whitman’s “multitudes”:

*The shards of grass grow men bunched together—multitudes—men larger than weeds and Whitmans...Corned beef comes on the first of every month—this the meat of hunger— ...in white cans with bold black writing... We—myself and mine—toss it in a pot and wonder how it will ever feed us all—witness and wait—<sup>3</sup>*

Then, crescendo: “What have we—the red aborigines—out of hopeful green stuff woven.”<sup>4</sup>

I also, as more of a prose reader at that time and place, undoubtedly felt his free verse and language more transparent and accessible – two attributes often assigned to the ideal democracy. As a citizen of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. United States, I was in the majority: that is, I learnt how to read: *I was*

---

<sup>2</sup> Diaz, Natalie. *When my Brother was an Aztec*. (Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon Press, 2012), 30.

<sup>3</sup> Diaz, Natalie. *When my Brother was an Aztec*, 30.

<sup>4</sup> Diaz, Natalie. *When my Brother was an Aztec*, 30.

part of the masses, female and male, Whitman was trying to reach. Today, I appreciate the work of Dickinson better, and, throughout the writing of this thesis, which made me more and more curious about Dickinson, I did quite a bit of reading of and “around” Dickinson. For example, I read the letters exchanged between her and Thomas Wentworth Higginson, the then Editor of the Atlantic Monthly, hoping that I would find evidence of Whitman and Dickinson’s acquaintance. What I found was that Higginson had read Whitman and commented: “It is no discredit to Walt Whitman that he wrote *Leaves of Grass*, only that he did not burn it afterwards”<sup>5</sup> and, in Dickinson’s letter to him, dated April 26, 1862, Dickinson had replied “You speak of Mr. Whitman. I never read his book, but was told that it was disgraceful”.<sup>6</sup> And honestly, with her father guarding the gates of their house and her knowledge on one side (“He buys me many books, but begs me not to read them, because he fears they joggle the mind”<sup>7</sup> (although in this same letter to Higginson, Dickinson lists Keats, Browning, Ruskin and Browne as part of her reading repertory)), and Higginson, on the other - who also told her she should not publish just yet<sup>8</sup> - what chance did she have of ever obtaining a copy of the controversial work? What I did - and do - find astonishing is that this yin/yang of US poetry were alive together, only a day’s travel away from each other.

Like many, both Walt Whitman, the poet, and Walt Whitman, the personality, held my interest. *Leaves of Grass*, especially, seemed particularly interesting for its poetic structure and content. It amazes me to consider the socio-political and artistic context of the time and to try imagine being a reader of that period coming across this long-lined and unrhymed work of “poetry”. True, it was a time of great innovation in US letters: the bold propositions and lifestyle of Henry David Thoreau, the profound essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson, the novels of neighbors, Herman Melville and Nathaniel Hawthorne, and, as mentioned above, the work of Emily Dickinson (although knowledge of her poetry, of course, came long after the fact of her life of writing). In the end, then, Whitman was the lone (public and publishing) daring poet of the day.

---

<sup>5</sup> “10 famous mean book reviews, edited for BuzzFeed Books’ new positive-only policy.” Alexander Petri. The Washington Post, November 7, 2013. Accessed February 2015.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/compost/wp/2013/11/07/10-famous-mean-book-reviews-edited-for-buzzfeed-books-new-positive-only-policy/?utm\\_term=.3a36ba459a49](https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/compost/wp/2013/11/07/10-famous-mean-book-reviews-edited-for-buzzfeed-books-new-positive-only-policy/?utm_term=.3a36ba459a49).

<sup>6</sup> Emily Dickinson to Thomas Wentworth Higginson, April 26, 1862.

<sup>7</sup> Emily Dickinson to Thomas Wentworth Higginson, April 26, 1862.

<sup>8</sup> Emily Dickinson to Thomas Wentworth Higginson, June 8, 1862.

As an undergraduate student, taking a religious studies class, I chose the spirituality found in Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* as the subject of my semester-end paper. For me, the theme was obvious. Whitman was part of his society and part of the wave, at least, of persons definitely interested in exploring spiritual belief systems from around the world. Like Thoreau, Emerson and others who helped developed transcendentalism, always acknowledging its debt to the Upanishads. Raised within the Quaker influence of this mother, Whitman absorbed these ethical approaches to thought, writing and living, and explored further into a pantheism:

*I hear and behold God in every object, yet I understand  
God not in the least*

*Nor do I understand who there can be more wonderful  
Than myself.*

*Why should I see God better than this day?*

*I see something of God every hour of the twenty-four, and  
each moment then,*

*in the faces of men and women I see God, and in my own  
face in the glass;*

*I find letters from God dropped in the street, and every  
One is signed by God's name,*

*And I leave them where they are, for I know that others  
will punctually come forever and ever.<sup>9</sup>*

This openness towards belief systems other than the Judeo-Christian perspective seemed to me, given the era's distance from my own's "modernity", incredibly ahead of its time, and spoke directly to me as someone who, as far as I can remember, has been interested in theology, not only religions. I can imagine the sweeping spirit of Whitman – his vast inclusiveness and compassion – translating into some thinking of him as, if not the Second Coming, then a potential spiritual leader worth his salt. That he almost categorically, politely, refused this role, would in many cases only add fuel to the flame.

I then laid aside Whitman, and more or less US literature in general, and left the country for a decade. When I decided to begin my doctorate with the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, I

---

<sup>9</sup> Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass* (1855). (New York, NY: Penguin, 2005), Lines 1272-1280, 48.

had decided to also embark on an MFA program in poetry. The MFA was a gift to myself. I had written some poetry here and there during my life, had taken an occasional poetry workshop, but for my BA and MA degrees, had studied predominantly political science and international relations while always working in the sector. I had no reference or support system for regularly writing poetry, but realized I needed it in my life – while realizing at the same time that I needed the structure of a degree-granting program to re-discover the richness of English at this point, and discover poetry while creating a poetry community for myself.

Considering possible thesis topics for the doctorate then, I knew I wanted to include my cultural knowledge and experience in language, as well as aspects of my political studies. I also knew I wanted to research a topic centered around poetry. Who else but Whitman could address all these sides of the prism at once: an internationally-known writer, who, even if he did not travel as he suggested, journeyed city streets, saw people's daily life and working conditions, talked to them, worked at city papers, and wrote a book of revolutionary poetry addressing and celebrating individuals, society, humanity and nature, one which has traveled the globe ever since? An added plus for me was that the translations which I had chosen to concentrate on were completed at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c., a period which had long fascinated me for the transformation, if not tumult, that took place, in, for me, all aspects of human life. There was also pleasure for me in going back to “American Studies” in some way. After so many years examining other languages, cultures and literatures, it felt intriguing – at the same time, at home and abroad –to have as my work's focus the translations and receptions of a *US* artist.

The original framework of my thesis was to examine the political-social context of the first translations of *Leaves of Grass* into French, Catalan and Spanish. I arrived at this idea in my very preliminary research of the world of *Leaves of Grass* translations when I came across a fact that stood out for me. This fact is that, although the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* had been published in 1855, no translation of it in French, Spanish or Catalan had been published, that is, until approximately sixty years later, then – with historic hindsight, almost at the same moment – the three translations are published, two complete, and one of twenty-three of the poems, within five years of each other. Why had so much time transpired between 1855 and any one of these translations, and given this fact, why suddenly, did they appear, practically hand-in-hand?

What does it mean that an important avant-garde work, controversial since its first publication in 1855, both for its content and form, lauded, for example, by Ralph Waldo Emerson, the then US person of letters par excellence, was not translated into French or Spanish, two languages of great political and cultural import during this time, until over fifty years after its initial publication? Even José Martí, quoted above, who wrote what is the first known prose piece published in Spanish on the US poet, written after Martí had heard Whitman deliver his lecture on Abraham Lincoln in New York, and who was a poet, critic, and translator of, among others, Emerson, Longfellow, and Poe, did not translate Whitman.<sup>10</sup> This fact, in and of itself, quality of translations aside, and the possible cultural, political and/or economic realities that influenced this fact seemed to me something worth investigating.

At first, I thought, did censorship, self or otherwise, play a role? Did negative critiques of the man and his work supersede any supporting voice and thus crush any curiosity about the work or discourage the hard work of the translation of it? Apart from Emerson's support, and Higginson's lack of it, what were other critics and people saying? In short, was there truly no great interest in Whitman in the Hispanic world until Cuban José Martí's essay, glowing with praise, began to pique interest? Was it the Nicaraguan poet, Rúben Darío, and his poem for Whitman in own ground-breaking *Azul*<sup>11</sup>, that had piqued Martí's? And why does there seem to be more of an interest in Whitman throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> c. in Latin America than in Spain? And in the case of the lack of a complete translation of *Leaves of Grass* into Catalan in the 20<sup>th</sup> c., and less translations of the work from Spain, what was the influence here of the Franco dictatorship? These last two considerations are outside the scope of this thesis, but worth looking into.

Who were these translators, or, should I say, who were these people who decided to translate Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, in 1908, 1909 and 1912, respectively, the French man of letters, Léon Bazalgette, who would publish his one of his essays on Whitman a year before his translation of *Leaves of Grass*, the *urbanista* Cebrià Montoliu, and the Uruguayan diplomat, on mission in Spain at the time, Álvaro Armando Vasseur? Why did they choose Whitman and why at that more or less same moment? Did they know each other? Did they know of each other? Was there an influential article or essay on Whitman at the time, instigating a Whitman wave

---

<sup>10</sup> Cohen, Matt, and Rachel Price. "Introduction to Walt Whitman, Poemas, by Alvaro Armando Vasseur." Whitmanarchive.org. Accessed April 2013. www.whitmanarchive.org.

<sup>11</sup> Rúben Darío, *Azul*. (Valparaiso: Impr. Excelsior, 1888).

during this era? Did they, for example, have access to José Martí's 1887 essay on Whitman? The essay commonly credited with bringing Whitman to the Spanish-speaking world?

Who among them had read J. Pérez Jorba's essay in Catalònia in 1900?<sup>12</sup> Even if one or all three of them had read these essays, that still allows for a delay between Martí's and Pérez Jorba's essays and the translations. Did train travel between Paris and Barcelona have an effect on the communication among the translators and others, such as literary critics and publishing houses? Did Cebrià Montoliu's brother, Manuel de Montoliu, or Eugeni d'Ors, both renowned Catalan literary critics, discuss Whitman with Cebrià? Or was Whitman a natural progression for Cebrià, given his personal interests in societal development and his other translations, including Ruskin and Emerson? Montoliu's story seemed, ironically to me, the most unexpected and interesting.

Ironic because Catalan was the language of which I had no knowledge; also ironic, as I looked into this Cebrià Montoliu: in short, why would this discrete-to-almost invisible, man-of-little-words European-Catalan urban planner chose the extroverted, loquacious and self-promoting New World-US poet and poetry to translate?; unexpected because the man, as stated, was an *urbanista*, not of the literary world by profession, although, as I would find out, part of an educated family whose other son, Manuel, as mentioned above, was a well-known literary critic. Both brothers formed part of an extensive group of intellectuals attempting to piece together a better version of social and urban development in their rapidly changing city-world; very interesting also due to, yes, its timing with the French and Spanish translations, but also in the context of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> .c and the strong movement towards Catalan independence well in motion. The disappointment with Montoliu's translation for me, if I can term it as such, is that he translated twenty-three of the *Leaves of Grass* poems, not the complete work.

The other two translators seemed less unexpected. Léon Bazalgette published *Whitman: the Man and the Work* in 1908<sup>13</sup> and his translation of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* in 1909.<sup>14</sup> Bazalgette was a man of letters – a writer, translator, critic - and had regular access to the literatures of the world via his foreign language abilities and his community, which included the likes of Emile

---

<sup>12</sup> Pérez Jorba, J. "Walt Whitman." *Catalònia*, February 3, 1900, 52-54.

<sup>13</sup> Bazalgette, Léon. *Walt Whitman: l'homme et son oeuvre*. (Paris: Société du Mercure de France, 1908).

<sup>14</sup> Bazalgette, Léon. *Feuilles d'Herbe*: (Paris: Société du Mercure de France, 1909).

Verhaeren, Stefan Zweig, and André Gide.<sup>15</sup> But, yes, he had not only translated Whitman, but would write an essay on him, like Montoliu would. Vasseur was an Uruguayan diplomat stationed in Spain when he translated Whitman and many think he translated it from the Italian.<sup>16</sup> This was to be confirmed, but, I admit, it was already enough for me to start losing some interest in this translation. On the other hand, it led me to explore further this first romance language translation into Italian by Luigi Gamberale in 1887.<sup>17</sup>

Getting back to the Catalan translation specifically, and, as alluded to above, Montoliu's interest and translation of Whitman were not followed directly by more or others. That is to say, apart from some poems translated here and there over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> c., for example by Augustí Bartra, Whitman's most famous work was apparently attempted but never completed by other Catalan translators in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. That is, until the publication of Jaume C. Pons Alorda's first complete translation of *Leaves of Grass* into Catalan in April of 2014.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, if sales of Alorda's translation are any indication, it would seem that there was a terrible hunger for Whitman among Catalans,<sup>19</sup> as the book, as of May 2017, is in going into its eighth edition.<sup>20</sup>

Cebrià Montoliu was an *urbanista* working in Barcelona when in 1909, he had his translations of twenty-three of Whitman's poems published with the publishing interest (publishing house and magazine), l'Avenç, who had also published his previous translations. Four years later, he wrote a critical work on Whitman's oeuvre: *L'home i sa tasca*. What was the relationship of this architect to the literary world at that time in Barcelona? When and how was Montoliu, who might be called today an activist, an environmentalist, or an eco-planner, exposed to Whitman? What did Montoliu see in Whitman's work that appealed to him and which he thought might be

---

<sup>15</sup> "Léon Bazalgette". Fr. Wikipedia. Accessed April 2015.

<sup>16</sup> "Introduction to Álvaro Armando Vasseur, Preface to the Sixth Edition of Walt Whitman: Poemas". Rachel Price and Matt Cohen. Whitman Archive. Accessed November 2015.  
<http://whitmanarchive.org/published/foreign/spanish/vasseur/preface-intro>.

<sup>17</sup> Walt Whitman. *Canti scelti*. Tr. Luigi Gamberale. Milano: Sonzogno, 1890. For a discussion on the two complete translations of *Leaves of Grass* into Italian, see Sotis, Grazia. "A Study of the two complete translations of Walt Whitman's 'Leaves of Grass' into Italian (1981). *Doctoral Dissertations*. AAI8203058. Digital Commons. Accessed September 2016. <http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/dissertations/AAI8203058> and Camboni, Maria. "Italian Translations of 'Poets to Come'". Whitman Archives. Accessed September 2016.  
<http://whitmanarchive.org/published/foreign/poets/italian/intro.html>.

<sup>18</sup> Alorda, Jaume C. Pons. *Fulles d'herba* (Barcelona: Edicions de 1984, 2014).

<sup>19</sup> Conversation with JCPA, April 2014, Café Zurich, Barcelona.

<sup>20</sup> Email Conversation with JCPA, May 2017.

important to share? Why did he translate the twenty-three poems he did? Why the critical essay? What does he say in it?

During this period, the city of Barcelona was undergoing tumultuous transformation: long a geographically endowed area: a port city of the Mediterranean, mountains not far, valuable metal in its earth, in 1888, it hosted the Universal Exposition and integrated six surrounding municipalities into itself for this event. Rapid urbanization continued with the addition of “Eixample” or ‘extension’ to the city in 1897. A little later, in 1924, the construction of the metro began and, in 1929, the city hosted another international exposition. Social unrest was running high throughout these decades, with clashes among anarchists, the working classes and governmental forces culminating in *la Setmana Tràgica* of July 1909.<sup>21</sup>

This is the backdrop against which Montoliu worked as Secretary of the Societat Cívica Catalana, la Ciutat Jardí, insisting on the idea of “garden cities” which he found impossible to advance in the face of so much private ownership within the city. In the end, he felt his ideas could not find fruition in his city. He left for the United States, birthplace of the author of *Leaves of Grass*, in 1920. He went searching for the open - physical and otherwise - spaces described by Whitman in his work and embodied in the poet himself. He went to where his ideals, he thought, would have a better chance of being realized and worked on the utopian project, Fairhope (Alabama) and taught in New Mexico, where he lived with Lucian Blasian, originally from Romania and, like Montoliu, a language professor. He died in New Mexico in 1923.

Notwithstanding these apparent personality differences, the link between the world views of Whitman and Montoliu, at least as expressed by Whitman in his poetry, and Montoliu, as expressed by the choices he made in his translation work, on top of his socially-minded concentration on the development of the *ciutat jardí*, seems clear. Both men were democratic forerunners, if not industrial-age visionaries, in their respective eras and cultures. Whitman was culturally inclusive in a way which was just finding a public voice in US culture and letters. Montoliu was able to see the rapid-paced development of the city of Barcelona, as elsewhere, for he traveled extensively to study how other European capitals were dealing with these new

---

<sup>21</sup> “Setmana Tràgica: Crònica Documental”. BCN.cat. Accessed December 2015.  
<http://www.bcn.cat/setmanatragica/ca/index.html>.



challenges, as something to be supervised and worked with if the overall standard of living was to keep pace with these changes.

Whitman wanted each citizen and worker to have access to and read his work. He wanted his “leaves” to fit into the readers’ pockets so that the reader could then be free to walk about and read his work in the great outdoors, or, if not great, then, like the author himself, lying down on a modest grassy patch of land; Montoliu wanted each resident and worker, who did not necessarily have a big house in the country to retire to on days off (let alone days off at all), to have access to an oasis of peaceful and rejuvenating nature, a free *ciutat jardí*, in the midst of the concrete and undoubtedly mostly dirty and raucous urban *barri*.

A strong point of my subject is the fact that the story of Cebrià Montoliu is little known and/or studied. I may not be presenting a voluminous amount of research and writing on him, but I am presenting something, and, as far as I can tell, it is original research and writing into this enigmatic player in the Catalan social and literary circles of the early 20<sup>th</sup> c. It seems that even during his life, although surrounded by the toasts of the town, Montoliu remained in the background, writing, but often under a pseudonym, and otherwise busy at work on his translations and fighting for, among other ideas, the inclusion of his gardens in the urban landscape. That being said, perhaps more would have been written on him if many in his milieu had not taken a turn towards the right near the end of the nineteen hundred-teens.<sup>22</sup>

If the cultural powers that be are willing to re-open this era and its actors for examination, perhaps Cebrià Montoliu will also get his due. Perhaps more documents and/or personal papers will be found in places which have been hidden, blocked or simply ignored for almost 100 years. Hopefully, journalists and writers at the Vanguardia and others will come to realize - and acknowledge - Cebrià Montoliu’s contribution to Catalan and world culture with his environmentally and human-focused *ciutat jardí*, his insightful choice of translating Ruskin, Emerson and Shakespeare, not to mention Whitman’s poetry, his extensive critical study on Whitman and his work and – why not – his search for a democratic utopia off, in all places, as I write this January 23, 2017, in the United States.

---

<sup>22</sup> See, for instance, The Vanguardia, article Oct 2015 on Manuel de Montoliu, “Montoliu y la historia literaria” por Adolfo Sotelo Vázquez.

## 1.2 Methodology

I began my investigation deeper into my specific subject of Cebrià Montoliu and his life and work after preliminary biographical and bibliographical research into the three translators of Walt Whitman I had decided to focus on (Léon Bazalgette, Cebrià Montoliu, and Álvaro Armando Vasseur, for the historical timing of each of their translations). This preliminary research of what I was able to find on their lives and writings led me conclude that the case of Montoliu was, as far as I could see, the most intriguing, not to mention untold, story of the three and would thus be a potentially fruitful terrain for further discovery and original research.

In my research, I employed a combination of empirical-analytical and interpretative approaches. I aimed to explain the factual cases of my subjects, one from mid-19<sup>th</sup> century US, and the other from late 19<sup>th</sup> century to early 20<sup>th</sup> century Catalunya, as well as to provide a basis from which suppositions could be made about them, their work and their eventual relationship to one another and to a greater socio-cultural canvas. This research would be “trans” in many ways: it would be on translation, so both multi-lingual and trans-cultural, as stated above, it would traverse time periods, and it would, logically, go well beyond national borders.

During this research, it was necessary to keep in mind the fact that one subject, Whitman, can be overwhelming in terms of the quantity of resources by him and about him, and this for more than 150 years now; and that the other, Montoliu, is an almost forgotten figure of whom not much had been written and not much was known. The need to limit information flow on the one hand, paired with the scouring for often shreds of information on the other, provided an interesting

investigative task and called for discernment in both cases. This case in point had the positive effect of giving me a broader perspective on what constitutes legitimate sources of data.

I began with the biographical facts of Whitman, from the extensive and trustworthy Walt Whitman Archive, as well as other key biographical documents; and, for Montoliu, the densely informative *Cebrià Montoliu (1873-1923): a cura de Francesc Roca*, the book of essays on many aspects of Montoliu's life and times, the result of a conference held on Montoliu in Barcelona (1993). I then went onto the crucial matter of their work. *Leaves of Grass* and the translations by Montoliu of twenty-three of the poems contained therein, *Fulles d'Herba* (1909) as well as the little examined *L'home i sa tasca* (1913), Montoliu's astute study of Whitman.

In terms of re-constructing the context of these writers' eras, including their places within those times, I turned to modern resources, but also to archival research. Here, I appreciated how, and perhaps why, in some cases historical information gets passed along and, in other cases, not, or not beyond the limited confines of certain interests. We have seen over this year how the digital age is allowing us to "find" new documents on subjects as well studied as Whitman, and during this time, it was exciting to hold original 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> c. sources in my hands – or, yes, to find them online by people interested in ensuring that we can all be privy to our shared past.

Limitations of this research project included the fact that, although archival documents are more available than before, not all documents from any past era still exist, let alone are available somewhere. Administrative and cultural barriers exist as well. A writer I read for this thesis does not read Catalan, yet, she wanted to know more about Montoliu than she could gather in English or Spanish. One document I wanted to access, from 1888, is unavailable due to legal issues.

Although my subjects are international, I cannot be everywhere that my subjects were, and not all libraries have the willingness, let alone the staff, to help researchers like myself via email.

### 1.3 Structure

Once I was writing the body of this dissertation, I realized how much affected I have been by my education. This sounds obvious, does it not? But I was taken back to a day in my senior year as a undergraduate in political science and, after a discussion with a friend who was majoring in a different discipline, it struck me how my way of presenting my argument, personality differences assumed and aside, had been formed by my specialty's professors and my classes with them during those four years and that - unbeknownst to me! –I had become a type of budding political scientist. From those years of reading and assignments in the sector and its close relatives, philosophy and sociology, for example, I had acquired a thought process, if not a brain, not washed, hopefully, but geared in a certain direction, towards a certain pattern of analysis.

Graduate studies followed, began in the US, then continued in France. I had already been exposed to French thought and culture thanks to my dedicated high school French teachers, and the fact that French was my minor as an undergraduate. I would spend a few years in the French educational system, in international relations, then comparative literature. My reading lists were bilingual, and did not stay within the confines of Franco-American borders. One of the things I found interesting during these years is that the style of a French book, for example, a Beauvoir or a Foucault, were so different from the anglophone books I was reading. There were the stereotypical impressions, i.e., US writers spoke directly, thus “simply” to the French mind, and, to the US-raised mind, the French were quite often seemingly long-winded and opaque.

While I hope I have not become long-winded myself, I did notice in terms of the organization of my thoughts for this thesis that, either due to my educational background – and/or the two people I am focusing on, each multi-faceted prisms in their own right, and light – there is more of a circular movement of ideas and that, as one facet is integral to the other/s, there is no clear delineation of this movement in numerous sets and subsets. I wonder how much this is an aspect of any research, but perhaps particularly within a trans-cultural, historical and personal context. Were the time periods in which Whitman and Montoliu so transformative and lively that there is no other way to approach a description, if not to walk slowly around the subject, reporting on and interpreting what we see? We are all prisms, so how does a scholar ever “capture” on paper a private individual and her biography – and all its implications in the greater public sphere?

Thus, this dissertation is divided into two main parts, in line with the fact that there two main actors of this thesis: that is, Walt Whitman and his work and Cebrià Montoliu and his work. Each of these two sections contains a chapter on the “life, times and mind” of each of these, in my opinion, historically significant individuals. I try to walk around both the object of their times – social, political and cultural tendencies, if not movements – as well as around each person’s place and participation in his era. In doing this, I want to present their minds – their interests and how these were expressed through their actions, among which figure their intellectual creation, and, possibly, the effect on others that this ensemble had on others then, and continues to have on us now. By the end of reading these two bio-socio-graphics, I hope the reader begins to appreciate the commonalities of their personal commitments and historic eras. I believe that this type of comparative study is fruitful for enlarging one’s picture of any one person, event or era, but also, perhaps ironically, for focusing in on the very specific facts of each individual life.

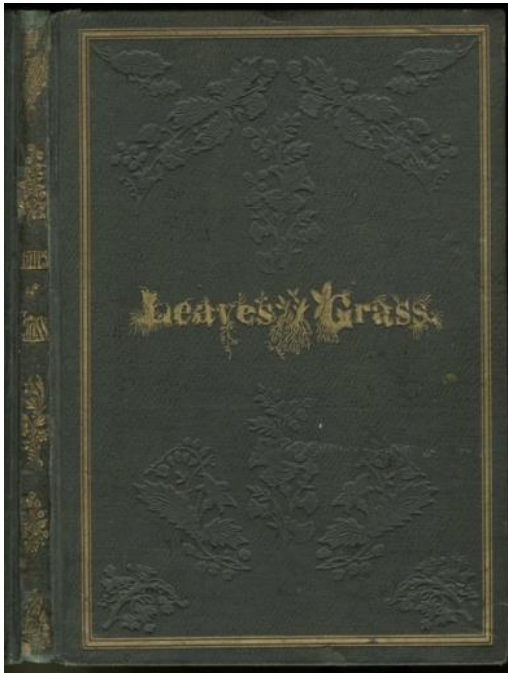
In the second half of each section, I examine different issues. For Whitman, the reception and the translation of his work seem key in, of course, the greater scheme of things, but also specifically as a background for Montoliu even knowing about him. I focus particularly on the period from the publication of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* in 1855 to 1913, the year Montoliu's *L'home i sa tasca* was published. I also direct my attention to Europe, even if, as we shall see, Whitman is the Great Uncontainable and his influence, ranging from a contradictory reaction gamut of anger, disdain, disbelief, love, to cult following, was already being felt in Latin America by the late 1800's. In the second half of Montoliu's section, on the other hand, I concentrate on his work on Whitman: not only his first significant translation of poems from *Leaves of Grass*, but also his well-studied and astute analysis of Whitman, the man and his work.

The fourth section leaves room for my summary of some of what I have discovered in my research and what I am supposing to, based on this accrued knowledge of these two writers – and so much more! – and their worlds of transformation within their societies, as the stage for all was becoming wider and more easily international. I will also discuss some of the questions raised in my mind thanks to this examination of these two and their work and present some ideas I have for future work on them and related topics. These conclusions and this *research ahead* will be followed by the bibliography I referred to during my research and writing. This bibliography, in turn, will be followed by an ample appendices section whose documents I hope will help further bring to life Whitman and Montoliu and aid towards a deeper understanding of them and their worlds, as well as the ripple effects they initiated which continue to expand outward today.

## 2. WALT WHITMAN

## 2.1 Walt Whitman: His World: Life, Times & Mind

*When I read the book, the biography famous;  
And is this, then, (said I,) what the author calls a man's life?  
And so will someone, when I am dead and gone, write my life?  
(As if any man really knew aught of my life;  
As if you, O cunning Soul, did not keep your secret well!).<sup>23</sup>*



lippsisters.com

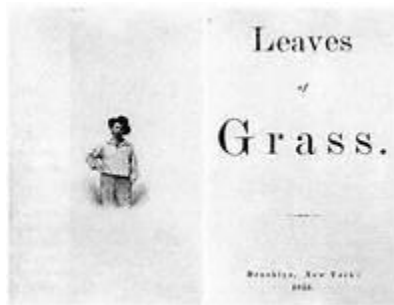
In 1855, using his printing acumen and access, Walt Whitman self-published the collection of poems, *Leaves of Grass*; now, of course, generally accepted as a landmark in US

literature, though at the time of its publication it evoked a greater range of opinion. Whitman wrote as the last line of the preface to the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, "The proof of a poet

---

<sup>23</sup> Whitman, Walt. "Inscriptions" (Deathbed edition). Abrams, Sam, ed. *The Neglected Walt Whitman: Vital Texts*. (Four Walls Eight Windows: NY/London: 1993), 92.

is that his country absorbs him as affectionately as he has absorbed it."<sup>24</sup> He believed there was a vital, symbiotic relationship between the poet and society. This connection was especially emphasized in "Song of Myself" by his use of an omniscient, first-person narration. As an epic, it deviated from the historic use of a hero and instead, the author assumed the identity of "one of the roughs"<sup>25</sup>, or, as Montoliu will say, in his study on the poet and his work, *l'home mitja*.<sup>26</sup> *Leaves of Grass* also responded to the impact that recent and ongoing urbanization in the US on the masses. Whitman has been designated the "bard of democracy" by some, a moniker reflecting his conceived ability to write from a singularly democratic platform – the every man, artisan, sharing his *yawp* with anyone who would listen, crafting the actual book with his own hands, and pictured, not posed, as a stiff laced-up bust, but as a relaxed friend and *camerado*.



www.loc.gov

Ralph Waldo Emerson, of course, is his first and most important launching critic, famously writing a letter to this unknown Whitman very soon after reading the copy Whitman had sent to the most widely known, and read, US man of letters. Emerson complimented the:

---

<sup>24</sup> Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass*. (1855). Accessed April 2017.  
<http://whitmanarchive.org/published/LG/1855/whole.html>.

<sup>25</sup> Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass*. (1855). Accessed April 2017, 29.  
<http://whitmanarchive.org/published/LG/1855/whole.html>.

<sup>26</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L'home i su tasca*. (Societat Catalana d'Edicions: Barcelona. 1913), 106.



*most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed...I give you joy of your free and brave thought. I have great joy in it. I find incomparable things said incomparably well, as they must be.*<sup>27</sup>



commons.wikimedia.org

One of his admirers, William Sloane Kennedy, speculated that "people will be celebrating the birth of Walt Whitman as they are now the birth of Christ."<sup>28</sup> Modernist Poet Ezra Pound would later call Whitman "America's poet... He *is* America."<sup>29</sup> Indeed, even Harold Bloom, literary critic, and author of the introduction of the 150th anniversary of *Leaves of Grass* chimes in here:

*Emerson invented the American Religion, Whitman incarnated it... if you are American, then Walt Whitman is your imaginative father and mother, even if, like myself, you have never composed a line of verse. You can nominate a fair number of literary works as candidates for the secular Scripture of the United States. They might include Melville's *Moby-Dick*, Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and Emerson's two series of *Essays* and *The Conduct of Life*. None of those, not even Emerson's, are as central as the first edition of "Leaves of Grass".*<sup>30</sup>

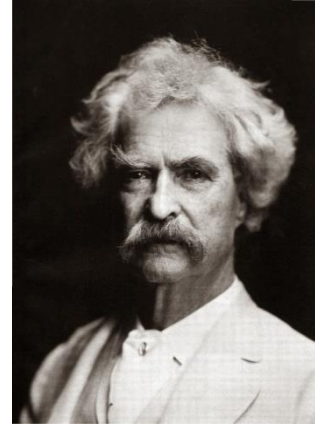
---

<sup>27</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson to Walt Whitman, July 21, 1855.

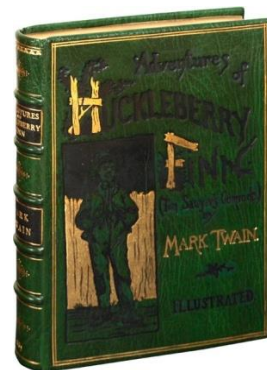
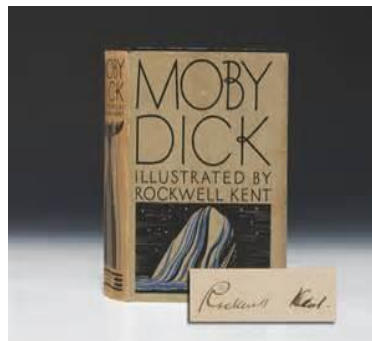
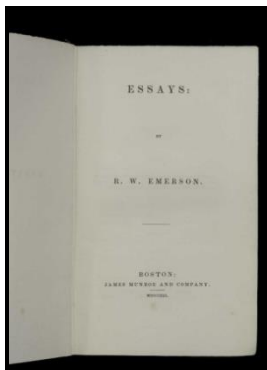
<sup>28</sup> Walt Whitman." Pbs.org. March 3, 2011. Accessed October 10, 2015. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/poetryeverywhere/whitman.html>.

<sup>29</sup>Pound, Ezra. "What I Feel About Walt Whitman." Storiografia.com. November 30, 2013. Accessed February 24, 2017. <https://storiografia.me/2013/11/30/ezra-pound-what-i-feel-about-walt-whitman/>.

<sup>30</sup> Bloom, Harold, ed. *Leaves of Grass*. 1855, xi.



Ralph Waldo Emerson/ commons.wikipedi.org Herman Melville/rockinpoetry.wikispaces.com Mark Twain /alicescarter.blogspot.com



(1841) korkmazlargrup.com / (1851) baumanrarebooks.com / (1885) media-cache-ak0.pining.com

Bloom continues, waxing international:

*No comparable figure in the arts has emerged from the last four centuries in the Americas: North, Central, South, or the Caribbean. Whitman's peers are Milton, Bach, Michelangelo, baroque masters of sublimity.*<sup>31</sup>

Walt Whitman was born on May 31, 1819 in West Hills, New York, in the house his father, Walter William, Senior, a carpenter by trade, had built and into which the family had moved in 1816.<sup>32</sup> Walt Whitman, the poet, was the second of Louisa Van Velsor's and Walter Whitman's

<sup>31</sup> Bloom, ed. *Leaves of Grass*, xi.

<sup>32</sup> "About Whitman: The Early Years". Accessed April 2015. <http://waltwhitman.org/home>.

eight surviving children, four of whom would go onto more “normal” lives, the other four, Jesse, Hannah, Andrew and Eddy, who would have much more troubled lives.<sup>33</sup>



Louisa Van Velsor, Whitman's mother



lilacs in bloom / waltwhitman.org / George Mallis

Whitman was born into a young, pre-Civil War country that had faith in its manifest destiny and was proud of itself. Whitman's own love for his country and its version of democracy can be at least partially attributed to his upbringing and his parents, his mother's Quaker background, for instance, and who showed their own admiration for their country by naming

---

<sup>33</sup> Reynolds, David S. *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography*. (New York, NY: Vintage Books, a Division of Random House, 1996), 28.

Walt's younger brothers after their favorite US heroes. The names included George Washington Whitman, Thomas Jefferson Whitman and Andrew Jackson Whitman.<sup>34</sup> In 1823, just before Walt turned four, his family moved to Brooklyn, where his father hoped to take advantage of the economic opportunities in a rapidly growing Brooklyn, which was already the third largest city in the US and whose population would double in the following fifteen years. Walter hoped for two things: to find steady work, and to also invest in real estate.<sup>35</sup>

**FOR SALE.—A small house and 4 lots on 20th and 21st street, situated 100 feet from Fifth avenue price \$3000. Streets paved and free from all incumbrances. Apply next door to Mr. Whitman. mh126f**

Daily Brooklyn Eagle, July 3, 1855, p.3. <sup>36</sup>

Less than a decade following this move, when Whitman was 11, family finances were in rough waters from a series of poor investments made by his father, and Whitman was taken out of school to help out with household income.<sup>37</sup> He began as an office boy for a Brooklyn-based father and son attorney team<sup>38</sup> and eventually found employment as a printer's devil at The Long Island Patriot.<sup>39</sup> Although pulled out of school, Whitman continued to read – voraciously - and by 1835 was a printer in New York City.<sup>40</sup> His father's taciturn ways and, eventually, increasing dependence on alcohol and conspiracy-driven politics contrasted sharply with his son's

---

<sup>34</sup> Erkkila, Betsy. *Whitman: The Political Poet*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1989), 14.

<sup>35</sup> Kaplan, Justin. *Walt Whitman: A Life*. (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1980), 64.

<sup>36</sup> Brooklyn Newspapers. Accessed April 2015 and March 2017.

<https://bklyn.newspapers.com/image/?spot=10891904#>.

<sup>37</sup> Reynolds, *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography*, 28.

<sup>38</sup> Canby, Henry Seidel. *Walt Whitman: An American: A study in biography*. (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1943), 18.

<sup>39</sup> Brooklyn Newspapers. Accessed April 2015 and March 2017.

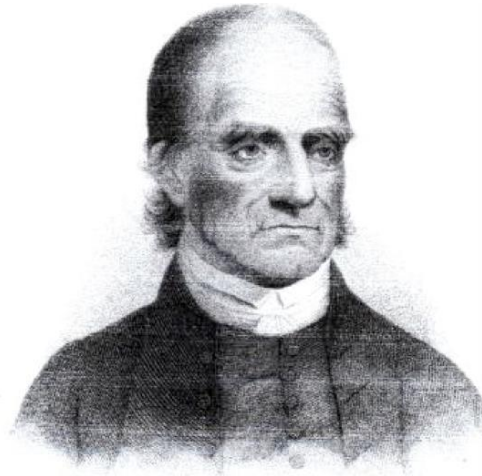
<https://bklyn.newspapers.com/image/?spot=10891904#>.

<sup>40</sup> "Walt Whitman: The Early Years". Accessed April 2015 and March 2017. <http://waltwhitman.org/about/about-whitman/>.

preference for a more optimistic course more in line with his mother's disposition.<sup>41</sup> "I stand for the sunny point of view -- stand for the joyful conclusions," he'd eventually be quoted as saying to Horace Traubel.<sup>42</sup> One such sunny moment he later recalled was, when he was five years old, he was lifted in the air and kissed on the cheek by the Marquis de Lafayette during a Brooklyn celebration on July 4, 1825.<sup>43</sup> We will see later how this key national date comes back into play. At ten, his parents took him to hear the anti-slavery and otherwise radical Quaker preacher, Elias Hicks, and in *November Boughs*, the author recalls the man's oratory talents:



Marquis de Lafayette / benfranklinworld.com



Elias Hicks / urrteachingpartnership.com

*...magnetic stream of natural eloquence, before which all minds and natures, all emotions, high or low, gentle or simple, yielded entirely without exception, was its cause, method and effect.*<sup>44</sup>

As well as his words:

---

<sup>41</sup> Reynolds, *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography*, 23-28.

<sup>42</sup> Whitman, Walt. *Whitman in Camden*, Horace Traubel, ed. October 4, 1888. Accessed January 2016. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/traubel/WWWiC/2/med.00002.82.html> , p430.

<sup>43</sup> Kaplan, Justin. *Walt Whitman: A Life*, 65-6.

<sup>44</sup> Erkkila, *Whitman: The Political Poet*, 16.

*More definitely, as near as I remember (aided by my dear mother long afterward) Elias Hick's discourse there in the Brooklyn ball-room, was one of his never-remitted appeals to that moral mystical portion of human nature, the inner light".<sup>45</sup>*

**The fulness of the  
godhead dwelt in  
every blade of grass.**

**-Elias Hicks**

cerebriot.com

At 17, Whitman turned from printing to teaching, working as an educator for five years in various parts of Long Island, while, by most accounts, he continued to do some writing and editing and was a member of at least two Long Island debating clubs.<sup>46</sup> It was at this time that Whitman published his first and – until this very year thought to be his only novel<sup>47</sup> - *Franklin Evans; or, The Inebriate*, which was first published on November 23, 1842.<sup>48</sup> Whitman wrote the novel at the height of popularity of the Washingtonian temperance movement and years later, he

---

<sup>45</sup> Erkkila, *Whitman: The Political Poet*, 16.

<sup>46</sup> Canby Seidel, *Walt Whitman: An American: A study in biography*, 24-26.

<sup>47</sup> "Unearthing lost Walt Whitman novel reveals roots of Leaves of Grass". Schuessler, Jennifer. February 21, 2017. <http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/unearthing-lost-walt-whitman-novel-reveals-roots-of-leaves-of-grass-1.2983652>.

<sup>48</sup> Erkkila, *Whitman: The Political Poet*, 29.

claimed embarrassment and called the work "damned rot."<sup>49</sup> He dismissed it by saying he wrote the novel in three days solely for money - while he was under the influence of alcohol himself.<sup>50</sup>

Whitman, however, could not stay away from journalism and, in 1838, he had started a weekly called the Long Islander that quickly folded - though some of this writing found its way into the Long Island Democrat.<sup>51</sup> In 1846 he became editor of the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, a prominent newspaper by then, demonstrating that he was a known figure in the New York City journalism scene. He was also taking on the position at an interesting political moment: Polk was President, the Mexican War was imminent, and unrest with the institution of slavery was becoming more and more pronounced.<sup>52</sup>



The Long Islander / First edition / July 12, 1839



The Brooklyn Eagle / February 14, 1846

---

<sup>49</sup> Whitman, Walt. *Whitman in Camden*, Horace Traubel, ed. May 2, 1888. Accessed January 2016.

<http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/traubel/WWWiC/1/med.00001.35.html>, 93.

<sup>50</sup> "Introduction to *Franklin Evans* and "Fortunes of a Country-Boy". Stephanie Blalock and Nicole Gray. Accessed April 2015. From the article: "Charles Eldridge, from the publishing firm Thayer and Eldridge, which published Whitman's 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, provided a slightly different account of the origins of *Franklin Evans*. Writing to Whitman disciple John Burroughs, Eldridge related how the poet once told him the inspiration for the novel was "relays of strong whiskey cocktails, in order to keep the printer's devil, who was waiting, supplied with copy."

<sup>51</sup> Killingsworth, Jimmie M. "Whitman's Journalism." Whitman Archive. Accessed March 8, 2017. [http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry\\_19.html](http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry_19.html).

<sup>52</sup> Canby Sedeil, *Walt Whitman: An American: A study in biography*, 44-5.

From the start of his days as a journalist,<sup>53</sup> Whitman, as an outspoken advocate of social, economic, and political reform in both local and national issues<sup>54</sup>, had a sharp pen and a set of opinions that did not always align with his bosses or his readers. He backed what some considered radical positions on women's rights, immigration and labor issues. He was a journalist at a time of great debate over democracy, nationalism and culture and he had his opinions.<sup>55</sup> Not surprisingly, his job tenures were often short and he developed a reputation.

In 1848, Whitman left New York for New Orleans, in company of his brother Jeff, to become editor of the Crescent.<sup>56</sup> It is in the Henry Bryan Binns biography (1905) that it was first put forth that Whitman had an affair, with a woman, while in New Orleans, a Creole and/or upper class woman, depending on the version, and with whom, for social and class reasons, he could not remain with.<sup>57</sup> Although in our day, this version of the biography is generally no longer accepted, it did hold sway for decades, and influenced many critics, including Montoliu and Bazalgette, both who listed Binns among their research references. Whitman's stay in New Orleans was a short three months – he would remain quiet on the subject of what seemed like a hasty departure - but was significant for what he saw of racial and cultural pluralism in the US, and where he saw - where his paper ran ads for – some of the true consequences of slavery.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> "Whitman's Journalism." Killingsworth, Jimmie M. Whitman Archive. Accessed March 8, 2017. [http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry\\_19.html](http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry_19.html). Biographers have always recognized Whitman's career in journalism as a prominent feature of his life and his development as the "poet of democracy." First through printing and then through news writing and newspaper editing, Whitman discovered the power of the written word in an age of increasing literacy. It was through journalism that Whitman first discovered himself to be a writer, first joined the public "conversation" on matters literary and political, and first established himself as a professional figure in an era when professionalism was on the rise."

<sup>54</sup> "About Whitman: The Early Years". <http://waltwhitman.org/home>. Accessed April 2015.

<sup>55</sup> Kaplan, Justin. *Walt Whitman: A Life*, 100.

<sup>56</sup> Erkkila, *Whitman: The Political Poet*, 52.

<sup>57</sup> Binns, Henry Bryan. *A Life of Walt Whitman*. (London: Methuen & Co., 1905), particularly 51 and 350.

<sup>58</sup> Erkkila, *Whitman: The Political Poet*, 52.

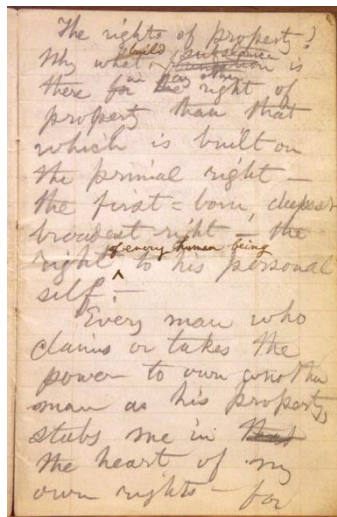


Whitman returned to Brooklyn in that autumn and started a new "free soil"<sup>59</sup> newspaper called the Brooklyn Freeman, which eventually became a daily.<sup>60</sup> Over the ensuing years, as the nation's temperature over the slavery question continued to rise, Whitman's own anger over the issue elevated as well. He often worried about the impact of slavery on the future of the country and its democracy. It was during this time that he turned to a small notebook, writing down his observations and shaping what would eventually be his poetic works. For example, here, we can see a rough draft of the "The Sleepers":

*<The rights of property! Why what <sup>build</sup> foundation <sup>substance</sup> is there ~~for the~~ <sup>in any other</sup> right of property than that which*

*is built on the primal right—the first-born, deepest broadest right—the right <sup>of every human</sup> being to his personal self.—*

*Every man who claims or takes the power to own another man as his property, stabs me in ~~that~~ the heart of my own rights><sup>61</sup>*

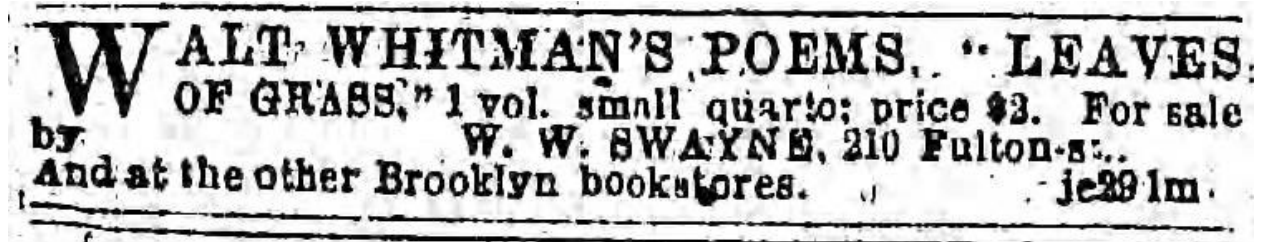


<sup>59</sup> Erkkila, *Whitman: The Political Poet*, 52. Whitman became a delegate to the Free Soil convention in Buffalo, NY, and joined Frederick Douglass, among others, in nominating Martin Van Buren for President on a platform of "Free soil, free speech, free labor, and free men".

<sup>60</sup> Kaplan, Justin. *Walt Whitman: A Life*, 156.

<sup>61</sup> The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed April 2015.

<http://www.whitmanarchive.org/manuscripts/notebooks/transcriptions/loc.00483.html>



Daily Brooklyn Eagle, June 29, 1855, p3 (same day as his father had also placed his real estate advertisement).<sup>62</sup>

*Of to-day I know I am momentary, untouched—I am  
the bard of the future...*

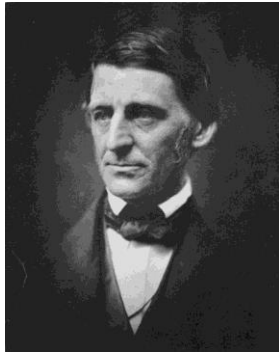
July 4, 1855, Whitman self-published a slim collection of twelve untitled poems with a preface, entitled *Leaves of Grass*. Whitman printed 795 copies of the book. At the time, *Leaves of Grass* marked a radical departure from established poetic norms. The voice, both oratory and conversational, came to the reader directly, in the first person, in long lines lacking set meter, exhibiting an openness of form which often approached prose. The book, a photograph of which is shown above at the beginning of this section, was designed and created by the author himself. Whitman chose a non-standard format<sup>63</sup>, forest green leather, with “Leaves of Grass” in gold, with threads - one could say sprouts, grass - growing from its letters. On the book's inside cover? The Samuel Hollyer engraving image, since become iconic, of the bearded poet himself, standing, not sitting, showing most of his body, not just his upper body, hand on one hip, the other in his pocket, with hat cocked and open rough linen shirt completing the poet's attire.

---

<sup>62</sup> The same advertisement for *Leaves of Grass* was also placed in the BDE June 30 and July 2 and 3, 1855. <https://bklyn.newspapers.com/image/50249999/?terms=Whitman%2C>. Accessed April 2015 and March 2017.

<sup>63</sup> Ed Folsom, Professor at the University of Iowa and one of the founders and directors of [www.whitmanarchive.org](http://www.whitmanarchive.org), has argued on this point that Whitman was working with a printer from some lawyer friends and the available paper was of this size. (Transatlantic Walt Whitman Conference, Bamberg, 2015).

Compare this author's photo with Ralph Waldo Emerson or Henry David Thoreau's portraits of the same era:



transcendentalists.com



laits.utexas.edu



zazzle.com

Whitman sent a copy of his work to Ralph Waldo Emerson, reigning King of US Letters, and who, just over ten years earlier, in 1844, had published his essay, "The Poet" in The Atlantic, where he defined poetry and what constitutes a poet:

*For it is not metres, but a metre-making argument, that makes a poem, — a thought so passionate and alive, that, like the spirit of a plant or an animal, it has an architecture of its own, and adorns nature with a new thing. The thought and the form are equal in the order of time, but in the order of genesis the thought is prior to the form. The poet has a new thought: he has a whole new experience to unfold; he will tell us how it was with him, and all men will be the richer in his fortune. For, the experience of each new age requires a new confession, and the world seems always waiting for its poet.*<sup>64</sup>

Emerson responded to the collection more favorably than Whitman's brothers, who Whitman had surprised with an "advanced copy" just before going to mass print. George, for one, "didn't think it worth reading". Emerson, on the other hand, read it and wrote an enthusiastic five-page

---

<sup>64</sup> "The Poet". Ralph Waldo Emerson. The Atlantic, April 1844.

letter to Whitman to praise the poetry as "the most extraordinary piece of wit & wisdom that America has yet contributed".<sup>65</sup> Whitman's father died a week after *Leaves of Grass* was published<sup>66</sup>, a few weeks too early to witness Emerson's reaction – and his son's unauthorized reproduction of the letter to promote his book's second edition.<sup>67</sup>

This edition remains anonymous, until 500 lines into the body of the text the author names and describes himself:

*Walt Whitman, an American, one of the roughs, a kosmos, disorderly, fleshly, and sensual, no sentimentalist, no stander above men or women or apart from them, no more modest than immodest.*<sup>68</sup>

According to an article published on the Academy of American Poets website, in the months following the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, U.S. and international popular and critical response to *Leaves of Grass* was mixed, to put it lightly. First and foremost, it was harshly criticized because Whitman's free verse did not fit into the existing British model of poetry, which was a tradition of rhyme, meter and structure, and still (one of Whitman's points of argument) the model being used in US literary circles.<sup>69</sup> One critic, in an 1855 review in Life Illustrated, noted, "It is like no other book that ever was written, and therefore, the language usually employed in notices of new publications is unavailable in describing it."<sup>70</sup> The transcendentalist and author of *Walden* and *Civil Disobedience*, Henry David Thoreau, wrote,

---

<sup>65</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson to Walt Whitman. July 21, 1855.

<sup>66</sup> Reynolds, *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography*, 330.

<sup>67</sup> Reynolds, *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography*, 343. Reynolds recounts that Whitman had kept the letter to himself for a month or so, then given it to his "old newspaper friend", Charles A. Dana, editor of the New York Tribune, whose positive review of *Leaves of Grass* had appeared in the paper July 23. The paper had also run ads for the work from July 6. Dana ran the letter October 10, apparently, without Whitman having suggested he do so, but definitely, as other historians have concurred, without Emerson's permission.

<sup>68</sup> Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass*. 1855.

<sup>69</sup> Poetry Foundation. Accessed 2014. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/walt-whitman>.

<sup>70</sup> "Review of Leaves of grass (1855). Author unknown. Life Illustrated. Whitman Archive. Accessed April 2016. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/reviews/lg1855/anc.00175.html>.

“Since I have seen him, I find that I am not disturbed by any brag or egoism in his book. He may turn out the least of a braggart of all, having a better right to be confident.”<sup>71</sup> Matthew Arnold, the English poet and cultural critic wrote, “. . . while you think it is his highest merit that he is so unlike everyone else, to me this seems to be his demerit.”<sup>72</sup>

Gradually, critical responses began focusing less on his formal revolutions, and more on the sexual themes found in the work. Though the second edition was already printed and bound, the publisher, Fowles and Wells were not enthusiastic.<sup>73</sup> The following year, Whitman published a revised edition of *Leaves of Grass* that featured thirty-two poems, including a new piece, "Sun-Down Poem" (later renamed "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"), as well as Emerson's letter to Whitman and the poet's long response to him.<sup>74</sup> Like its earlier edition, this second version of *Leaves of Grass* failed to gain much commercial traction, even less, in fact, than the first edition.<sup>75</sup> In 1860, a Thayer and Eldridge, a Boston publisher, wrote a letter to Whitman offering to print a third edition of *Leaves of Grass*.<sup>76</sup> With the start of the Civil War, however, the publishing firm was driven out of business, which, among other things, also furthered Whitman's financial struggles as pirated copies of *Leaves of Grass* – printed from the electrotype plates Richard Worthington purchased in 1879, became available for some time.<sup>77</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> “Whitman Reading Guide”. Poets.org. Accessed May 2016.

[https://www.poets.org/sites/default/files/images/8\\_WhitmanReadingGuide.pdf](https://www.poets.org/sites/default/files/images/8_WhitmanReadingGuide.pdf).

<sup>72</sup> “Whitman Reading Guide”. Poets.org. Accessed May 2016.

<sup>73</sup> “*Leaves of Grass*, 1856 edition”. Harold Aspiz. Whitman Archive. Accessed February 2017. “Although reluctant to print the work, the firm advertised on 16 August in the same periodical that it was the principal distributor for this “neat pocket volume” in a stereotyped edition of 1,000 copies: “The author is still his own publisher, and Messrs. Fowler and Wells will again be his agents for the sale of the work”.

[http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry\\_22.html](http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry_22.html).

<sup>74</sup> Aspiz, “*Leaves of Grass*, 1856 edition”.

<sup>75</sup> Aspiz, “*Leaves of Grass*, 1856 edition”.

<sup>76</sup> “*Leaves of Grass*, 1860 edition”. Gregory Eiselein. The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed February 2017.

<sup>77</sup> Eiselein, “*Leaves of Grass*, 1860 edition”.

*I see so much.*<sup>78</sup>



theatlantic.com

Whitman opposed the extension of slavery in the United States and supported the Wilmot Provision, which was intended to banish slavery from the land acquired during the Mexican War (1846-1848).<sup>79</sup> He was critical, however, of the abolition movement, believing it did more harm than good, mainly because of what he saw as its members' disruptive methods, as he disagreed with the refusal of the Southern states to put the interests of the nation as a whole above their own. In 1856, in his unpublished "The Eighteenth Presidency, Voice of Walt Whitman to each Young Man in the Nation, North, South, East, and West", he wrote:

*...mechanics, farmers, boatmen, manufacturers, and all work-people of the South, the same as the North! you are either to abolish slavery, or it will abolish you.*<sup>80</sup>

In the essay, he then goes on to directly address the "the three hundred and fifty thousand owner of slaves".<sup>81</sup> Whitman, however, also subscribed to the widespread opinion that even free African-Americans should not vote.<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Walt Whitman to Thomas Jefferson Whitman, March 18, 1863.

<sup>79</sup> History.com. Accessed May 2015. <http://www.history.com>.

<sup>80</sup> Erkkila, *Whitman: The Political Poet*, 131.

As the American Civil War was beginning, Whitman published his poem *Beat! Beat! Drums!* as a patriotic rally for the North.<sup>83</sup> On December 16, 1862, a listing of fallen and wounded soldiers in The New York Herald included "First Lieutenant G. W. Whitman",<sup>84</sup> and Walt immediately made his way south to find him - "walking all day and night, unable to ride, trying to get information, trying to get access to big people", Whitman later wrote.<sup>85</sup> He eventually found George, alive, with only a superficial wound on his cheek.<sup>86</sup> The author of *Leaves of Grass* was profoundly affected by seeing the wounded soldiers and the "heap of feet, arms, legs, &c. under a tree, in front of a hospital" and left for Washington, D.C, December 28, 1862.<sup>87</sup>

In Washington, Whitman's friend Charley Eldridge helped him obtain part-time work in the army paymaster's office, leaving time for Whitman to volunteer as a nurse in the army hospitals.<sup>88</sup> He would write of this experience in "The Great Army of the Sick", published in a New York newspaper in 1863 and, twelve years later, in a book called *Memoranda during the War*.<sup>89</sup> He then contacted Emerson, this time to ask for help in obtaining a government post, but Emerson's letter of recommendation to Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury,<sup>90</sup> was met with a Chase who did not want to hire the author of "a very bad book," and considered the poet himself "a decidedly disreputable person".<sup>91</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> Erkkila, *Whitman: The Political Poet*, 195.

<sup>82</sup> "Re-Scripting Walt Whitman: An Introduction to His Life and Work". Ed Folsom and Kenneth M. Price. Accessed November 2016. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/anc.00152.html>.

<sup>83</sup> "Whitman: The Civil War Years".

<sup>84</sup> "Traveling with the Wounded: Walt Whitman and Washington's Civil War Hospitals". Martin G. Murray. Whitman Archive. Accessed April 2015.

<sup>85</sup> Walt Whitman to Louisa Van Velsor Whitman, 29 December 1862.

<sup>86</sup> Erkkila, *Whitman: The Political Poet*, 198.

<sup>87</sup> Erkkila, *Whitman: The Political Poet*, 198.

<sup>88</sup> Murray, "Traveling with the Wounded: Walt Whitman and Washington's Civil War Hospitals".

<sup>89</sup> Murray, "Traveling with the Wounded: Walt Whitman and Washington's Civil War Hospitals".

<sup>90</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson to Salmon P. Chase, 10 January 1863.

<sup>91</sup> Murray, "Traveling with the Wounded: Walt Whitman and Washington's Civil War Hospitals".

On September 30, 1864, Whitman's brother George was captured by Confederates in Virginia,<sup>92</sup> and another brother, Andrew Jackson, died of tuberculosis aggravated by alcoholism on December 3.<sup>93</sup> That month, Whitman committed his heavy-drinker brother Jesse to the Kings County Lunatic Asylum<sup>94</sup> and, additionally, his sister Hannah the seemingly only one in the family that understood her brother's writing,<sup>95</sup> was emotionally unwell.<sup>96</sup>

Whitman eventually got a better-paying government post as a low-grade clerk in the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the Department of the Interior, thanks to his friend and forever supporter of the poet, William Douglas O'Connor.<sup>97</sup> O'Connor, a poet in his turn, daguerreotypist and an editor at the Saturday Evening Post had written to William Tod Otto, Assistant Secretary of the Interior, on Whitman's behalf.<sup>98</sup> A month after Whitman began this new position, on February 24, 1865, his brother George was released from capture and granted a furlough due to poor health.<sup>99</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup> George Washington Whitman to Louisa Van Velsor Whitman, 2 October 1864.

<sup>93</sup> Thomas Jefferson Whitman to Walt Whitman, 16 April 1860 and Whitman Archive. Accessed April 2015. <http://whitmanarchive.org/biography/chronology.html>.

<sup>94</sup> Whitman Archive. Accessed April 2015. <http://whitmanarchive.org/biography/chronology.html>.

<sup>95</sup> "Whitman (Heyde), Hannah Louisa (d. 1908)". Paula K Garrett. Whitman Archive. Accessed November 2015. [http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry\\_90.html](http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry_90.html).

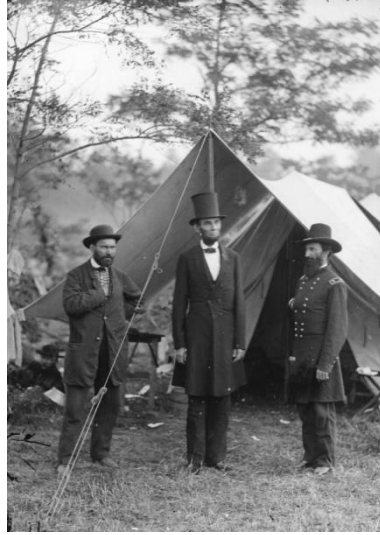
<sup>96</sup> Whitman Archive. Accessed April 2015. [http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry\\_90.html](http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry_90.html). and Reynolds, *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography*, 410.

<sup>97</sup> Reynolds, *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography*, 455.

<sup>98</sup> Reynolds, *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography*, 455.

<sup>99</sup> Murray, Martin G. "A Brother's Love." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 10, no. 4 (1993): 209-12. Accessed April 6, 2016. <http://ir.iowa.edu/wwqr>.





quotesgram.com

On April 14, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. Devastated, Whitman who was in New York at the time to published *Drum-Taps*, added at least three poems to the collection: “Hush’d Be the Camps To-day”; “O Captain, My Captain”; and “When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloom’d: all about or for Lincoln, but in which Lincoln is never named.”<sup>100</sup> Here, from this latter poem:

*When lilacs last in the door-yard bloom’d,  
And the great star early droop’d in the western sky in the night,  
I mourn’d, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring*<sup>101</sup>

Effective June 30, 1865, Whitman was fired, not without controversy, from this latest job by the new Secretary of the Interior, James Harlan.<sup>102</sup> Though Harlan dismissed several clerks who "were seldom at their respective desks", many historians put forth that he may have fired Whitman on moral grounds after “finding” an 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass* in Whitman’s

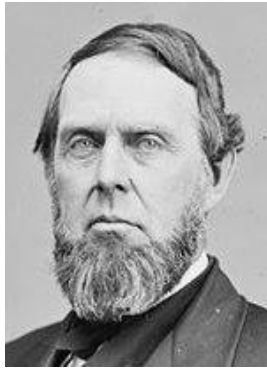
---

<sup>100</sup> Erkkila, *Whitman: The Political Poet*, 227.

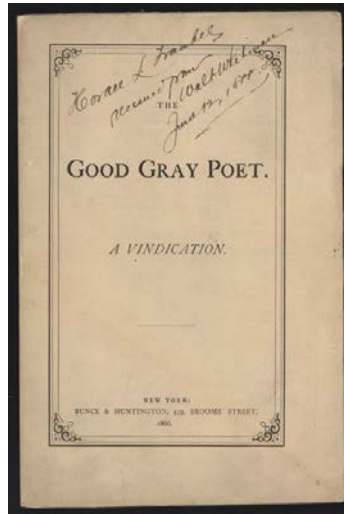
<sup>101</sup> Poetry Foundation. Accessed April 2014. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/45480>.

<sup>102</sup> Erkkila, *Whitman: The Political Poet*, 246.

work desk.<sup>103</sup> Again, O'Connor stepped in for his friend and protested until J. Hubley Ashton had Whitman transferred to the Attorney General's office shortly after.<sup>104</sup> O'Connor, though, was still upset and vindicated Whitman by publishing a biased, but effective, biographical essay, “The Good Gray Poet: A Vindication”, in January 1866, the appellation “good grey poet” having been suggested by the poet himself.<sup>105</sup> The pamphlet, published by Bunce and Huntington, defended Whitman as a wholesome patriot, and established the poet's nickname while increasing his popularity.<sup>106</sup>



sniggle.net



loc.gov



en.wikipedia.org

Also helping to boost Whitman popularity was the publication of *Drum Taps*, but specifically “O Captain! My Captain!”, a formally conventional poem for Whitman, the only poem to appear in

---

<sup>103</sup> Kaplan, Justin. *Walt Whitman: A Life*, 304.

<sup>104</sup> Sedeil, *Walt Whitman: An American: A study in biography*, 248.

<sup>105</sup> “The Good Gray Poet: A Vindication”. William Douglas O’Connor. Bunce and Huntington. January 1866. Accessed May 2015. <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/whitman/goodgraypoet.html>. Full Essay to be found in the appendices of this dissertation.

<sup>106</sup> Accessed May 2015. <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/whitman/goodgraypoet.html>.

anthologies during Whitman's lifetime and the Whitman poem that remains the most-widely anthologized until this day.<sup>107</sup>

Part of Whitman's role at the Attorney General's office was interviewing former Confederate soldiers for Presidential pardons and he would say of these interviewees: "There are real characters among them", and, later would write, "and you know I have a fancy for anything out of the ordinary".<sup>108</sup> In the immediate years after the Civil War, Whitman continued to visit wounded veterans and it was during this time that he met Peter Doyle, a young Confederate soldier and train car conductor and with whom Whitman developed an almost instant and intense bond.<sup>109</sup> As Whitman's health began to unravel in the 1860s, Doyle helped nurse him back to health.<sup>110</sup> The two's relationship experienced a number of changes over the ensuing years, with Whitman believed to have suffered greatly from feeling rejected by Doyle, though the two would remain friends.<sup>111</sup>

---

<sup>107</sup> Whitman Archive. Accessed May 2015.

[http://www.whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry\\_40.html](http://www.whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry_40.html)

<sup>108</sup> Walt Whitman to Anson Ryder, Jr., 15–16 August 1865.

<sup>109</sup> Whitman Archive. Accessed April 2015.

<http://whitmanarchive.org/biography/correspondence/tei/pri.00023.html>.

<sup>110</sup> Whitman Archive. Accessed April 2015.

<http://whitmanarchive.org/biography/correspondence/tei/pri.00023.html>.

<sup>111</sup> Whitman Archive. Accessed April 2015.

<http://whitmanarchive.org/biography/correspondence/tei/pri.00023.html>.



eriegaynews.com

In August 1866, Whitman took a month off in order to prepare a new – and he hoped, last - edition of *Leaves of Grass*, which would not be published until 1867 after difficulty in finding a publisher.<sup>112</sup> In England in February 1868, *Poems of Walt Whitman* was published thanks to the influence of William Michael Rossetti, with minor changes that Whitman reluctantly approved. The edition became popular, especially with endorsements from the likes of the highly respected writer Anne Gilchrist, whose “An Englishwoman’s Estimate of Walt Whitman” was published in the Boston-based paper, the Radical.<sup>113</sup> Whitman’s mother remarked on how valuable this support would be for Whitman.<sup>114</sup>

---

<sup>112</sup> Whitman Archive. Accessed October 2014.

[http://www.whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry\\_48.html](http://www.whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry_48.html)

<sup>113</sup> Whitman Archive. Accessed November 2014.

<sup>114</sup> “Whitman, Louisa Van Velsor [1795–1873]. Sherry Ceniza. Whitman Archive. Accessed May 2017. [http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry\\_69.html](http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry_69.html).



preraphaelitpaintings.blogspot.com



en.wikipedia.org

Another edition of *Leaves of Grass* was issued in 1871, the same year it was mistakenly reported that its author had died in a railroad accident.<sup>115</sup> Whitman's international fame increased and he remained at the Attorney General's office until January 1872 after which he left to spend much of the rest of the year caring for his mother who was now nearly eighty and struggling with arthritis.<sup>116</sup> He also traveled around the east coast of the US and was invited to Dartmouth College to give the commencement address on June 26, 1872.<sup>117</sup>

1873 would prove a difficult year for Whitman: in January 1873, Whitman suffered the first of what would be a series of strokes and his beloved mother died May 23, three days after his arrival to her bedside.<sup>118</sup> She would write one last letter in the final days of her life:

*farewell my beloved sons*

*farewell i have lived beyond all comfort in this world dont mourn for me my beloved sons  
and daughter farewell my dear beloved walter.*<sup>119</sup>

---

<sup>115</sup> Walker, Cody. "Walt Whitman, Run Down by a Train!" Kenyon Review, March 25, 2015. Accessed February 2017. <https://www.kenyonreview.org/2015/03/walt-whitman-run-down-by-a-train/>.

<sup>116</sup> Whitman Archive. Accessed September 2013.

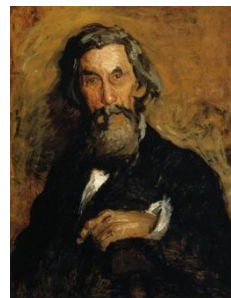
<sup>117</sup> Richardson, Todd. "The "Strong Man" at Dartmouth College: Two Uncollected Parodies of Whitman's 'As a Strong Bird on Pinions Free.'" *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 18 (Summer 2000), 81-84.

<sup>118</sup> "Walt Whitman". Biography.com. Accessed April 2014. <http://www.biography.com/people/walt-whitman-9530126>.

Whitman, unable to move about on his own very easily, was convinced to move from Washington to the home of his brother—George Washington Whitman, an engineer and his wife, Louise—at 431 Stevens Street in Camden, New Jersey.<sup>120</sup> His other brother, Edward, an "invalid" since birth, also lived in the house.<sup>121</sup> Though emotionally fragile, and despite some household tension between him, the eternal “loafer” and his scheduled brother and sister-in-law, Whitman was very productive during this time and published three versions of *Leaves of Grass*, among other works. He was also eventually fully physically active in this house, going about his business independently and summering in nearby Timber Creek with his friends, the Stafford family, mud-baths and naked sun-bathing included.<sup>122</sup> To his brother’s great confusion – this was the same brother who felt *Leaves of Grass*, of which he received an “advanced copy”, was not worth reading - seemingly very important people visited his idle brother Walt, including Oscar Wilde and Thomas Eakins.<sup>123</sup>



pinterest.com



all-art.org

---

<sup>119</sup> Louisa Van Velsor Whitman to Walt Whitman, [17–20 May 1873].

<sup>120</sup> “Walt Whitman”. Biography.com. Accessed April 2014. <http://www.biography.com/people/walt-whitman-9530126>.

<sup>121</sup> “Whitman, George Washington”. Murray, Martin G. Whitman Archive. Accessed May 2016. [http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry\\_68.html](http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry_68.html)

<sup>122</sup> Sedeil, *Walt Whitman: An American: A study in biography*, 289.

<sup>123</sup> “Walt Whitman in Camden.” Accessed May 2016.

<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/historic/whitman/camden.htm> and Traubel, Horace.

When George and Louise moved to the countryside, outside of Camden, Whitman decided to stay in the city and bought his own house at 328 Mickle Street.<sup>124</sup> First taken care of by tenants, he was completely bedridden for most of his time in Mickle Street and it was during his first months here that he began socializing with neighbor Mary Oakes Davis—the widow of a sea captain.<sup>125</sup> In a housekeeping-housing exchange, Davis moved in with Whitman on February 24, 1885, bringing with her furniture (Whitman had been cooking from a kerosene burner and eating off of a cardboard box) as well as a cat, a dog, two turtledoves, a canary, and other assorted animals and a warm, joking relationship between the two ensued.<sup>126</sup>



[pinterest.com / Mary O. Davis, Peter Doyle and Watch...?](https://www.pinterest.com/MaryO.Davis/PeterDoyleandWatch.../)

During this same time period, as referred to above, Whitman produced further editions of *Leaves of Grass*, in 1876, 1881 and 1889. The 1881 edition received a cool welcome from the Boston District Attorney, who wrote to the Boston publisher, James R. Osgood and Company,

---

<sup>124</sup> The Material Culture Museum. Accessed May 2016. <http://digitalmuseum.lookingforwhitman.org/category/new-jersey/>.

<sup>125</sup> “Mary O. Davis.” Dinner with Walt. Accessed February 2015. <http://dinnerwithwalt.com/?p=1163>.

<sup>126</sup> <http://dinnerwithwalt.com/?p=1163>.

*We are of the opinion that this book is such a book as brings it within the provisions of the Public Statutes respecting obscene literature and suggest the propriety of withdrawing the same and suppressing the editions thereof.*<sup>127</sup>

Osgood gave into the pressure and stopped publication, a controversial decision which actually helped sales of the book once taken on by the Philadelphia publisher, David McKay, with whom the publication rights to *Leaves of Grass* remained.<sup>128</sup> It should be noted that following this edition, no further changes to what was already were made, that is, any new material was added as additional text.

As the end of 1891 approached, he prepared a final edition of *Leaves of Grass*, a version that has been nicknamed the "Death-bed Edition." He wrote:

*L. of G. at last complete—after 33 y'rs of hackling at it, all times & moods of my life, fair weather & foul, all parts of the land, and peace & war, young & old.*<sup>129</sup>

Whitman approved this last edition a year before his departure. This would be the edition that many translators, including Bazalgette and Montoliu, would work from. In the one hundred years that have passed, an appreciation (and an availability?) of the first edition, that of 1855, in its dynamic and raw forms, has grown.

That year as well, preparing for death, Whitman commissioned a granite mausoleum, shaped like a house, which he visited often during construction. In the last week of his life, he was too weak to lift a knife or fork and wrote: "I suffer all the time: I have no relief, no escape: it is monotony—monotony—monotony—in pain." His last bedridden and bed sore words were to

---

<sup>127</sup> "Walt Whitman: A Life". Scribd.com. Accessed June 2016. <https://www.scribd.com/read/190803362/Walt-Whitman-A-Life>.

<sup>128</sup> Green, Charles. "David McKay: Whitman's Final Publisher." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 24 (Fall 2006), 126-140. <https://doi.org/10.13008/2153-3695.1820>.

<sup>129</sup> "*Leaves of Grass*, 1891–92 edition". R.W. French. Whitman Archive. Accessed May 2016. [http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry\\_27.html](http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry_27.html).



his friend and nurse, Frederick Warren Fritzingler, or “Warry”: “Shift, Warry”, Horace Traubel, his faithful friend and secretary, too, at his side.<sup>130</sup>



waltwhitmanbirthplace.wordpress.com



vqronline.org

Whitman died on March 26, 1892. An autopsy, approved by Whitman’s site-in-law, Louisa, wife of George – to the protest of Mary O. Davis – put the cause of death as "pleuritis of the left side, consumption of the right lung, general military tuberculosis and parenchymatous nephritis."<sup>131</sup> A public viewing of his body was held at his Camden home and over one thousand people came to pay their respects.<sup>132</sup> Whitman's oak coffin was barely visible because of all the flowers and wreaths left for him.<sup>133</sup> Four days after his death, he was buried in his tomb at Harleigh Cemetery along with another public ceremony at the cemetery, with an estimated 4,000 people, with

---

<sup>130</sup> “Fritzingler, Frederick Warren (1866–1899)”. Joann P. Krieg. Whitman Archive. Accessed May 2016. [http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry\\_80.html](http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry_80.html).

<sup>131</sup> Reynolds, *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography*, 588.

<sup>132</sup> Reynolds, *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography*, 589.

<sup>133</sup> Reynolds, *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography*, 589.

friends giving speeches, live music, and refreshments.<sup>134</sup> Whitman's friend, the orator Robert Ingersoll, delivered the eulogy, praising Whitman for being a poet of “nature and humanity”.<sup>135</sup>

## 2.2 *Leaves of Grass*: Reception and Translations

### 2.2.1 Walt Whitman in England, Ireland & Canada

*You cannot really understand America without Walt Whitman, without Leaves of Grass... He has expressed that civilization, 'up to date,' as he would say, and no student of the philosophy of history can do without him.*<sup>136</sup>

Although, of course, here we are not talking here about literal translation, Whitman in England and Ireland concerns cultural translation, and logically, reception. These supporters, of artistic, social activist and specifically literary milieu, were reading Whitman in the original English, granted, however, their promotion of Whitman and his work increased quickly increased English language readership, even, to speak of the back and forth movement, this “carrying across” of ideas (not to mention people, as we shall see), in the US. Furthermore, England and Ireland’s geographical placements and its proximity to other languages and cultures, greatly facilitated the dissemination of Whitman’s poetry, then prose, into the European mainland and mind.

### England

---

<sup>134</sup> Reynolds, *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography*, 589.

<sup>135</sup> Reynolds, *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography*, 589.

<sup>136</sup> Mary Smith Whitall Costelloe, in Traubel, Horace, *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, Vol I, 423. Whitman Archive. Accessed April 2016.

*How good that English crowd has always been to me – the whole crowd. I want it to be forever recognized. When the time comes for you to tell your own story – give your own version – you must do those English...justice.*<sup>137</sup>

One of Whitman's most important European editors, critics, and supporters, William Michael Rossetti, best known as an art critic, one of the seven founding members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood<sup>138</sup>, and of brother of Dante Gabriel and Christina Rossetti, received a copy of *Leaves of Grass* soon after its publication, as a gift from William Bell Scott, who had been introduced to it by Thomas Dixon of Sunderland.<sup>139</sup> Rossetti responded enthusiastically and discussed it with many other British writers, among them Swinburne, and the article he published in the London Chronicle (6 July 1867) created great interest in Whitman in Britain and America and was much appreciated by John Burroughs, William D. O'Connor, and Whitman himself. It was reprinted in several publications in the United States.<sup>140</sup>

Rossetti agreed to edit a selection of *Leaves of Grass* from the 1867 edition, omitting any poem he thought likely to offend English readers, the publisher, John Camden Hotten of London, or likely censors.<sup>141</sup> Rossetti's editing of Whitman's *Poems* (1868) was a major event in the growth of Whitman's reputation and readership in Europe. Rossetti's prefatory notice admitted that Whitman had what Rossetti considered faults of diction and even subject matter, but asserted, at the same time, that Whitman was among the greatest poets of the English language.<sup>142</sup> Rossetti's edition contained about one half of the 1867 text; the poems that were included were printed

---

<sup>137</sup> Whitman to Traubel in Blodgett, Harold William. *Walt Whitman in England*. (New York: Russell and Russell, 1973) and (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1934), preface, vii.

<sup>138</sup> "William Michael Rossetti". Wikipedia. Accessed April 2017.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Michael\\_Rossetti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Michael_Rossetti).

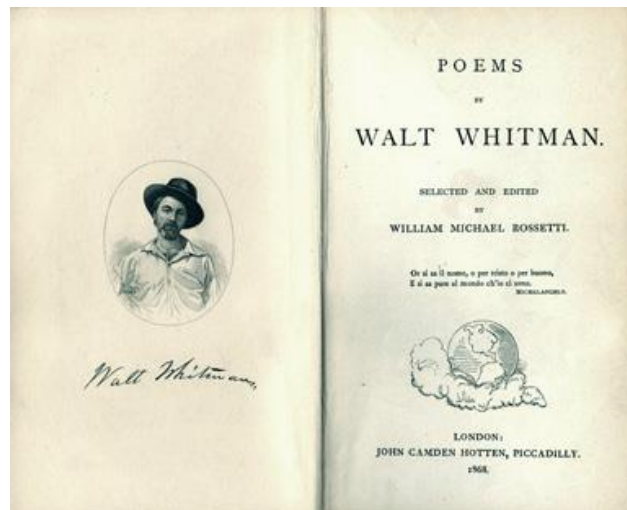
<sup>139</sup> Smith, Sherwood. "Rossetti, William Michael [1829–1915]". Whitman Archive. Accessed May 2015.  
[http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry\\_48.html](http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry_48.html).

<sup>140</sup> Smith, Sherwood. "Rossetti, William Michael [1829–1915]", Whitman Archive.

<sup>141</sup> Smith, Sherwood. "Rossetti, William Michael [1829–1915]", Whitman Archive.

<sup>142</sup> Smith, Sherwood. "Rossetti, William Michael [1829–1915]", Whitman Archive.

without emendations. This would be the only time Whitman would agree to be “cut” and it is a decision he would regret, referring to the edition as “the horrible dismemberment of my book”.<sup>143</sup>



whitmanarchive.org

Rossetti and Whitman remained friends throughout their lives, however, and it is thanks to Rossetti’s edition that Whitman and Anne Gilchrist was struck by Whitman’s work and the two became life-long friends. Gilchrist wrote the important essay, “An Englishwoman’s Estimate of Walt Whitman”, published in England, and in Boston, in the Radical in 1870.<sup>144</sup> Whitman would say he always found his female readership better able to understand him, and Gilchrist may be a case in point. Given the often sex-focused critiques of Whitman’s poems, it was particularly significant that a woman, moreover, a well-bred society lady, for whom those pedigrees matter, would recognize the literary – and sensual – merit in the work:

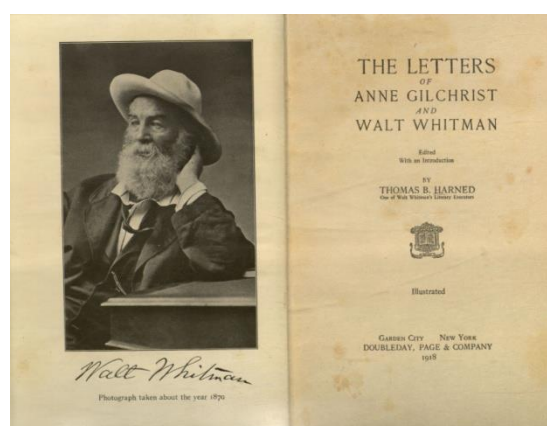
*You can imagine what such a thing as her Estimate meant to me at that time. Almost everybody was against me—the papers, the preachers, the literary gentlemen—nearly everybody with only here and there a dissenting voice—when it looked on the surface as*

<sup>143</sup> Walt Whitman to F.S. Ellis, August 12, 1871.

<sup>144</sup> “Anne Gilchrist, Walt Whitman, and the Achievement of Disinhibited Reading”. Cavitch, Max. Victorian Poetry 43.2, (2005), 249-261. Muse.Jhu.Edu. Accessed April 2016. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/185565/summary>.

*if my enterprise was bound to fail—bound to fail. Then this letter—these letters: this wonderful woman.*<sup>145</sup>

Gilchrist would move her family to Philadelphia to be near her “soul mate”, and Whitman, often staying with the family there, in the bedroom designated as his bedroom, was close with the whole family. Herbert Gilchrist, Anne’s son, would go on to be an artist and make several portraits of Whitman.



its.brandeis.edu

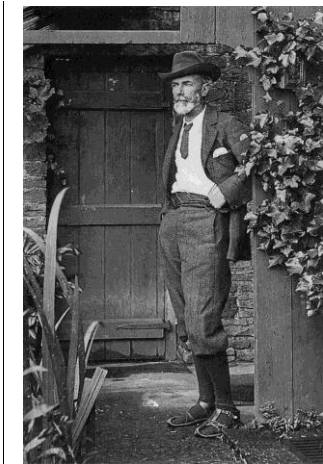
In 1872, Rossetti publishing *American Poems*, "dedicated with homage and love to Walt Whitman," including 32 poems by Whitman.<sup>146</sup> He included one poem ("A Boston Ballad (1854)") by Whitman in his anthology *Humourous Poems* (1872) and then brought out a new edition of Whitman's *Poems* in 1886.<sup>147</sup> Rossetti's letters and diaries, available in collections, with many also readily available on the Whitman Archive, contain many references to Whitman and show his deep affection for Whitman as poet and correspondent, as well as his sympathy with Whitman's social and political ideals.

<sup>145</sup> Whitman, Walt, in *Walt Whitman in Camden*. Horace Traubel, Vol. I., Sunday, May 27, 1888. Whitman Archive. Accessed February 2015. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/traubel/WWWiC/1/whole.html,218>.

<sup>146</sup> Smith, Sherwood. "Rossetti, William Michael [1829–1915]", Whitman Archive.

<sup>147</sup> Smith, Sherwood. "Rossetti, William Michael [1829–1915]", Whitman Archive.

Rossetti's help did not end with literary promotion, but, in 1876, after an article appeared in the West Jersey Press (Camden) about Whitman's poverty and neglect in the United States, Rossetti offered Whitman the assistance of his English admirers, and Whitman agreed to accept it.<sup>148</sup> Rossetti's efforts led to many generous subscriptions to the 1876 Centennial edition of *Leaves of Grass*, which Whitman said "pluck'd me like a brand from the burning, and gave me life again".<sup>149</sup> Famous personages among the subscribers were John Ruskin – did Montoliu know this? - Alfred Tennyson, with whom Whitman also shared a warm correspondence,<sup>150</sup> and Edward Dowden. Rossetti, tireless in his efforts, even wrote a letter to President Grover Cleveland proposing that the United States grant Whitman a government pension.<sup>151</sup>



Carpenter / Commons.wikipedia.org



Addington Symonds / Rictornorton.co.uk

---

<sup>148</sup> Smith, Sherwood. "Rossetti, William Michael [1829–1915]", Whitman Archive.

<sup>149</sup> Smith, Sherwood. "Rossetti, William Michael [1829–1915]", Whitman Archive.

<sup>150</sup> Letter from Lord Alfred Tennyson to Walt Whitman, January 15, 1887. "*Dear old man,* I the elder old man have received your Article in the Critic, and send you in return my thanks and New Year's greeting on the wings of this east-wind, which, I trust, is blowing softlier and warmer on your good gray head than here, where it is rocking the elms and ilexes of my Isle of Wight garden./ Yours always / Tennyson."

<sup>151</sup> Smith, Sherwood. "Rossetti, William Michael [1829–1915]", Whitman Archive.

A final grouping of English supporters—an array of writers, intellectuals, shopkeepers, and laborers—also regarded Whitman as a figure of pivotal importance. These men, among them Edward Carpenter and John Addington Symonds,<sup>152</sup> were struggling to establish a positive identity based on same-sex love, what was beginning to be called "homosexuality", within a culture which increasingly categorized such love as criminal. Edward Carpenter, a major interpreter of Whitman in England, first came to Camden to visit Whitman in 1877 and returned again in 1884.<sup>153</sup> Carpenter influenced various artists, intellectuals, and sex radicals through the example of his life - notable for his decades-long live-in relationship with a working-class man, George Merrill - and through his writings, including his Whitman-inspired poetry collection *Towards Democracy* (1883),<sup>154</sup> his many essays, and later his *Days with Walt Whitman* (1906), a memoir of his association with Whitman and an analysis of Whitman's work and influence. Carpenter helped spread word of Whitman to the labor movement in England where the poet's language of comradeship was employed by English followers eager to advance a more egalitarian society.

#### Ireland<sup>155</sup>

*I have been reading over an old letter from Pete Doyle: so simple, true, sufficient: without even the knowledge of professional things—yet a rounded man. The real Irish*

---

<sup>152</sup> Lauritsen, John and Thorstad, David. *Los primeros movimientos en favor de los derechos homosexuales: 1864-1935*. Translated by Francesc Parcerisas. (Barcelona: Tusquets, 1974), 65, 68.

<sup>153</sup> Kantrowitz, Arnie. "Carpenter, Edward [1844–1929]". Whitman Archive. Accessed February 2017. [http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry\\_12.html](http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry_12.html).

<sup>154</sup> Lauritsen, John and Thorstad, David. *Los primeros movimientos en favor de los derechos homosexuales: 1864-1935*. Translated by Francesc Parcerisas. (Barcelona: Tusquets, 1974), 66.

<sup>155</sup> Unless otherwise noted, this information is taken from "Politics (and Poetry?) Make for Capricious Bedfellows: The Case of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman and William Butler Yeats", Kaiser, A., a paper presented at the 9<sup>th</sup> Transatlantic Walt Whitman Association Symposium, University of Exeter, May 2016, a paper owing much to Joann P. Krieg, and her exhaustively researched work, *Walt Whitman and the Irish* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000).

*character, the higher samples of it, the real Keltic influences: how noble, tenacious, loyal, they are! It was always the Irish in O'Connor that came up strong.*<sup>156</sup>

Given both US society's familiarity with the Irish, and through them, Ireland; the fact that the US and Ireland share at least one language; and that both countries have had their particular relationship with England, it is not surprising that Whitman, too, had many Irish friends and contacts, both among Irish and Irish-Americans.

By the second half of the 19th century, the US had most definitely severed the political cord between itself and England, but it was still a young country, searching for a more independent cultural identity. Did it need a national poet to give its developing democracy a voice?

Ireland, following the Acts of Union of 1800, spent the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. fighting for Home Rule, or self-determination. How the new Irish state should be imagined beyond the political was also in debate. Should it look to its mythological, Celtic roots for inspiration? Which language should its citizens speak and how could literature, and other arts, aid in the forming this new state? Did the future Ireland, in its *own* turn, need a national poet to be its cultural beacon lighting the way towards an independent identity?

Was Whitman, in *Leaves of Grass* and in *Democratic Vistas*, not to mention via his political activism, his journalism and lecturing, calling for the same or claiming to be himself this poet? Did Yeats, through his writing, as well as his involvement in the Irish Literary Revival, and later, as a governmental official, hope to become – by default or de facto - the national poet of the New Irish State? If these two do, in fact, conceive of the place of poetry, or a poet, can or should hold in a society as vital, how do they construe this poetry or poet?

---

<sup>156</sup> Whitman, Walt, in *Walt Whitman in Camden*. Horace Traubel, Vol. I., Sunday, June 24, 1888. Whitman Archive. Accessed February 2015. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/traubel/WWWiC/1/whole.html>, 376.





WBY / jessi221122.wordpress.com

First of all, before going on, I would like to establish, with the help of the priceless Whitman Archive and Joann P. Krieg, and her book, *Walt Whitman and the Irish*, the firm relationship between Whitman and the Irish, whom he liked and supported, that is, as long as they were not “too” Catholic.

Thanks to Thomas W.H. Rolleston, one of the group of Trinity College, Dublin students who were Whitmanites, and to whom, in 1881, Whitman would grant permission to translate *Leaves of Grass* into German, Whitman becomes a supporter of Home Rule, which contained, along with many other aspects, the tenet to abolish landlordism, and the return of land to whom worked it. In a January 1889 note, when Horace Traubel asks Whitman what he thinks of Home Rule, Whitman replies:

*Home Rule? I want home rule for everybody — every section: home rule: for races, persons: liberty, freedom: as little politics as possible: as little: as much goodwill, as much fraternity, as possible: that’s how it presents itself to me.*<sup>157</sup>

---

<sup>157</sup> Traubel, Horace. With Walt Whitman in Camden, January 1889. Traubel, Horace. *With Walt Whitman in Camden*. 9 vols. Vols. 1-3. 1906-1914 (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, (1961), 167. *With Walt Whitman in Camden*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1961; Vol. 4. Ed. Sculley Bradley. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1953; Vol. 5. Ed. Gertrude Traubel. Carbondale: U of Southern Illinois P, 1964; Vol. 6. Ed. Gertrude Traubel and William White. Carbondale: U of Southern Illinois P, 1982; Vol. 7. Ed. Jeanne

Whitman's full circle of Irish and Irish-American acquaintances, friends and/or supporters, is too many expansive to name here, but I will offer a smattering:

John Boyle O'Reilly, a practicing Catholic, but, from Whitman's perspective, still deeply committed to democracy edited The Boston Pilot in which Oscar Wilde's and Yeats' work would first appear in the US;<sup>158</sup> William Douglas O'Connor, of course, a staunch ally of Whitman's during most of their relationship and who wrote the famous "The Good Gray Poet: A Vindication" (1866), inspired by the firing of Whitman from a post in Washington DC by the Secretary of the Interior, James Harlan, because of, most think, what he considered offensive passages in *Leaves of Grass*; William Sloane Kennedy who developed a friendship with Whitman over many visits and an extended correspondence. He was a poet and also wrote *Reminiscences of Walt Whitman* (1896) and an edition of *Walt Whitman's Diary in Canada* (1904);<sup>159</sup> Bram Stoker, who wrote Whitman passionate letters and visited him in Camden three times between 1884 and 1887;<sup>160</sup> Oscar Wilde, who called Whitman's poetry "Greek and sane" and who, according to Krieg, "fairly worshipped" Whitman, whom he visited in 1882;<sup>161</sup> Edward Dowden, a professor of English literature at Trinity College, Dublin, who, in 1871 published in the Westminster Review "The Poetry of Democracy: Walt Whitman" in which he describes Whitman as a "man unlike any of his predecessors...Bard of America, Bard of Democracy", which, as Whitman states in a letter to the author, he "completely accepts ...".<sup>162</sup> In 1871 Dowden issued a

---

Chapman and Robert Maclsaac. Carbondale: U of Southern Illinois P, 1992; Vols. 8-9. Ed. Jeanned Chapman and Robert Maclsaac. Oregon House, Calif.: W.L. Bentley, 1996. Whitman Archive. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/traubel/WWWiC/3/whole.html>.

<sup>158</sup> Walt Whitman to William Sloane Kennedy, 13 June 1887. Note #5. The Walt Whitman Archive.

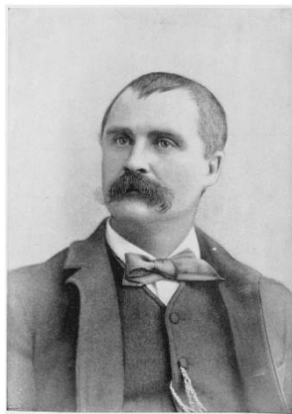
<sup>159</sup> Walt Whitman to William Sloane Kennedy, 13 June 1887. Note on Correspondent. The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>160</sup> Hindley, Meredith. "When Bram met Walt." Humanities, November/December 2012, Vol 33, Num 6. Neh.gov. Accessed January 2015. <https://www.neh.gov/humanities/2012/novemberdecember/feature/when-bram-met-walt>

<sup>161</sup> "Oscar Wilde and Walt Whitman Once Spent an Afternoon Together. Here's What Happened." Friedman, David M. October 17, 2014. The New Republic. <https://newrepublic.com/article/119885/when-walt-whitman-met-oscar-wilde>.

<sup>162</sup> Walt Whitman to Edward Dowden, January 18, 1872.

significant essay, “The Poetry of Democracy: Walt Whitman,” which reflected a growing admiration for the American bard among Irish literati.<sup>163</sup> Dr. John Todhunter, a friend of Dowden’s and a Quaker. Todhunter wrote a study of Shelley in 1880 in which he named Shelley, Hugo and Whitman as the three poets of democracy. Yeats, in 1889, in his review of Todhunter’s collection of poetry, *The Banshee and other poems* claimed that the title poem, with its “wild, irregular” verses was something akin to Whitman’s.



O'Reilly / modhistorymusings.com



Dowden / en.wikisource.org

Rounding out this array of friends, contacts and writing, was Whitman’s poem, “Old Ireland” appearing in the New York Leader November 2, 1861; the fact that, in the 1913 and 1914 strikes in Ireland, leaders tried to inspire the workers with Whitman’s words.; and, as Krieg points out, in 1916, the year of the events in Dublin known as the Easter Rising, a rebellion against the British government, Whitman’s words were also invoked.<sup>164</sup>

Krieg puts forth that:

---

<sup>163</sup> Krieg, Joann P. *Whitman and the Irish*. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000). The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed March 2016. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/anc.00160.html>

<sup>164</sup> Krieg, Joann P. *Whitman and the Irish*. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000). The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed March 2016. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/anc.00160.html>

*WBY was among those who flirted with Whitman, but he ultimately pushed him aside as a model because the poet of democracy failed to garner a significant audience.*<sup>165</sup>

At one point, in a letter to an admirer of Whitman's Yeats said he yes, he, too, had learnt from him: but, additionally, at another moment, Yeats lists Whitman among the errors of his youth. On the other hand, John Yeats, the poet's father, and, later on in life, a US resident, gave a speech in 1913 at a NY Whitmanic dinner and his other son, Jack, a visual artist like the father, made sketches of Whitman.

Besides feeling that Whitman had not garnered a sufficient at-home audience, Yeats, unlike Whitman, served in his state's legislature. It could argued that his politics, to say nothing of his persona, were much more conservative than Whitman's – or that even his involvement in political affairs, often at a distance at first then through "official" means –was a more conservative approach than Whitman's journalistic, editorial, lecturing and putting himself out on the stump choices.

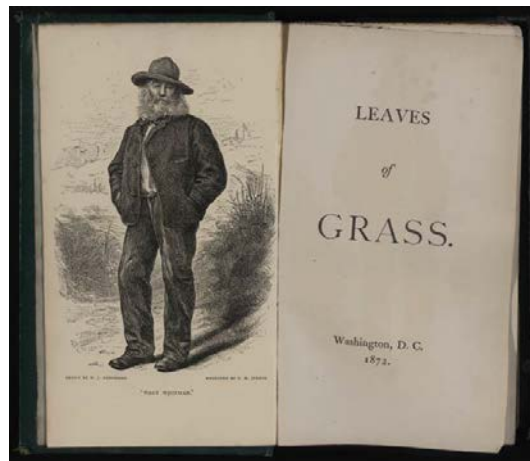
Examining Whitman's prefaces to the 1855, 1872 and 1876 editions of *Leaves of Grass* (there are none for the 1856, 1860-1, 1867 and 1881-2 editions) one can ascertain some ideas of what Whitman was thinking on this question of a "National Poet" and how these ideas may have contrasted with Yeats, or with any of his friends who wanted Irish Home Rule.

Ivan Marki, in his Whitman Archive introduction to the 1855 preface of *Leaves of Grass*, is struck by the absence of an "I" throughout the Whitman's preface. For Marki, this is a reminder that its words are spoken about, but not by, "the greatest poet," because at the outset of the first *Leaves* this program is also "the direct trial of him who would be the greatest poet" (xi). If the

---

<sup>165</sup> Krieg, Joann P. *Whitman and the Irish*. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000). The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed March 2016. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/anc.00160.html>

experiment succeeds, if the speaker passes his trial, he will have become "the greatest poet." That being said, by Whitman's choice of the very first word of this preface -"America" – one might suspect Whitman thinks where this "greatest poet" might be found. And, concluding, in paragraph 28, Whitman states, "The proof of a poet is that his country absorbs him as affectionately as he has absorbed it."



loc.gov

According to Luke Mancuso, in his introduction to the 1872 preface, in this preface, the mood is very political, but not in terms of advancing any new ideas about the poet's role in the Body Politic. The 1876 preface, on the other hand, Whitman is much more succinct with an agenda that he sets out in three points, the first one bringing in the literary:

*1. That the true growth-characteristics of the democracy of the New World are henceforth to radiate in superior literary, artistic and religious expressions, far more than in its republican forms, universal suffrage, and frequent elections, (though these are unspeakably important.)*

The Irish literary revival had its beginnings as early as Standish O'Grady's *History of Ireland* published in 1878. Although nationalist, like the earlier Young Ireland movement, its aim was to revive the submerged culture of the Irish and foster a new sense of nationalism. O'Grady was

among many of the writers and thinkers in Ireland who in these years were admirers of Whitman. The clear leader of this literary movement, however, was William Butler Yeats, early on a Whitman follower who later turned away because of what he perceived as Whitman's failure to gain an audience among his countrymen and women. Yeats's nationalism had been awakened by contact with the great Fenian revolutionary (brotherhood dedicated to an Independent Irish State in 19<sup>th</sup> c. and 20<sup>th</sup> c.) John O'Leary. But Yeats believed that the Fenian movements had been far too romantic in their vision of Ireland and too uncritical of its reality.

Yeats founded the Irish Literary Society, in London, in 1891 where he and others, including the aforementioned Rolleston, as Vice President, and Edward Dowden, wrestled with questions of what constituted Irish culture and Irish literature and what each of those entities would be in the future. Their objective was an Irish literature that would take its place among those of other nations and command their respect. Sounds vaguely familiar, doesn't it?

One of the first things the group of young nationalists did was to institute the *Dublin University Review*, begun in August 1885 with Rolleston as editor. The *Review* not only included pieces by Yeats and O'Grady but also offered the unusual combination of the unionist Dowden alongside of Land Leaguers. Dissatisfied with the literary example of Young Ireland, Yeats turned his attention to another generation of writers who had emphasized Irish culture, the generation of Sir Samuel Ferguson, William Allingham, and, later, Standish O'Grady. Yeats's essay on Ferguson appeared in the second issue of the *Dublin University Review*, November 1886, a copy of which Rolleston sent to Whitman.

In 1889 Yeats was unknown in America beyond Boston, but Traubel, who professed no knowledge of Irish literature, believed Yeats's essay important enough to enter into the chronicle

he was keeping all of its points that Whitman had marked before sending the *Review*. According to Krieg, looking at these passages out of their intended context provides little additional knowledge about Ferguson, but the emphasized words clearly show that Whitman agreed with Yeats. Of particular interest to him would have been the reference to the “truly” bardic poet as one whose appeal is universal, who speaks to the “great concourse of the people,” what Whitman had long desired.

Again, from his nationalist stance, Yeats viewed Whitman as a failed national bard because he lacked a loyal following of his fellow citizens. But just how truly Yeats wrote “for the people” is debatable, for in his essential conservatism he seemed to find something threatening in the idea of democracy – and is “bard”, then, less democracy-rooted than “national poet”?

What could be fruitful terrain for further research here would be to compare Whitman’s mid to latter 19th c. US, with the latter 19<sup>th</sup> c and early 20<sup>th</sup> c Irish Revival movement with Montoliu’s period in Catalan history. Was there a similar conversation happening amid Catalan poets and social activists at the time? I mean specifically on this question of searching for cultural independence, as the US was looking to free itself from English literary traditions and standards, or, as Ireland was doing, and in its particular situation, attempting to revive the Irish language while fighting for at least “Home Rule” if not outright independence from the United Kingdom. Of course, the situations are not wholly comparable. Catalan is a language apart from Spanish, unlike US English and British English; and, unlike in Ireland, there was not the same need, or to revive the Catalan language, although efforts from Pompeu Fabre and his grammatical guide to Catalan intellectuals using more often Catalan in their discourse and writing. For example, no one questions today Manuel de Montoliu’s Catalan, but he does say in his *Memorias* that Spanish

was the language in his household. I might hypothesize that no, no such conversation was taking place here in Catalunya, based on all the reading I have done about and from the era. But perhaps this would have been expressed differently than the US or Ireland. Perhaps this is a sub-text to the Catalan fight for independence that did not find its terms in a poet to lead the nation to a true freedom – who would that have been? Verdaguer, Maragall? – but more in terms of a political person to lead the nuts and bolts legal struggle to independence, as a Prat de la Riba might provide. This is, at least, an issue to reflect upon and to research – for example, in the era’s magazines and their myriad of manifestos.

---

Whitman in Canada, or Richard Maurice Bucke [1837-1901]



en.wikiquote.org

Richard Maurice Bucke was a Canadian psychiatrist who became one of Whitman's most devoted friends and supporters in the poet's later years. He, like his friend, Edward Carpenter, wrote on Whitman, with Bucke’s biography, *Walt Whitman*, being published in 1883<sup>166</sup> and his paper, *Cosmic Consciousness*, originally read before the *Medico-Psychological Association in*

---

<sup>166</sup> “Richard Maurice Bucke”. The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed January 2016. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/bucke/biography/anc.00247.html>.



*Philadelphia, on May 18, 1894, published in the Conservator*,<sup>167</sup> became a book for which he is still known: *Cosmic Consciousness* (1901).<sup>168</sup> The thoughts contained therein are based on his personal experience of enlightenment - which he always noted had occurred after an evening of reading Whitman and Romantic poets - features Whitman, and Bucke's messianic view of him.<sup>169</sup> Bucke first read Whitman in 1867 and was immediately enthralled, though his initial overtures toward the poet went nowhere when Whitman failed to answer his letters. Once the two men met in the late 1870s, however, they began a life-long friendship and important literary relationship.

After several years of wandering, work and adventure—including a battle with Shoshone Indians and a trek through the Rocky Mountains in winter that cost him one of his feet and part of the other due to frostbite—Bucke received an inheritance which allowed him to attend McGill University Medical School.<sup>170</sup> Further study in Europe followed. Bucke then returned to Canada, married, and for several years lived the life of a small town doctor.<sup>171</sup> In 1876 he was appointed superintendent of the hospital for the insane where he gained a reputation as one of the leading "alienists" of his day, with an approach to treating the mentally ill that was deemphasized alcohol, drugs and physical restraints in favor of useful work and a healthy living environment.<sup>172</sup>

---

<sup>167</sup> Bucke, Richard Maurice. *Cosmic Consciousness. (1894). Babel.HathiTrust.org. Accessed June 2016.*

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=aeu.ark%3A%2F13960%2Ft6h13g068;q1=Cosmic%20Consciousness>.

<sup>168</sup> "Richard Maurice Bucke". The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed January 2016.

<http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/bucke/biography/anc.00247.html>.

<sup>169</sup> "Richard Maurice Bucke". The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed January 2016.

<http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/bucke/biography/anc.00247.html>.

<sup>170</sup> "Richard Maurice Bucke". The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed January 2016.

<http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/bucke/biography/anc.00247.html>.

<sup>171</sup> "Richard Maurice Bucke". The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed January 2016.

<http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/bucke/biography/anc.00247.html>.

<sup>172</sup> "Richard Maurice Bucke". The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed January 2016.

<http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/bucke/biography/anc.00247.html>.

A wide-ranging reader, Bucke intensely read Whitman's poetry for several years, committing much of it to memory; (it has been alleged that eventually Bucke knew all of *Leaves of Grass* by heart.).<sup>173</sup> One evening in 1872, following a poetry reading aloud with friends - Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, and Whitman - Bucke experienced an overwhelming state of illumination and joy, in which he felt himself surrounded with light from an inner fire. Something similar occurred when he met Whitman in person. While in Philadelphia on professional business, Bucke crossed the river to Camden. Though their visit was outwardly unremarkable, Bucke left in a state of "mental exaltation", a feeling that remained for six weeks, with Bucke's ensuing devotion to both Whitman the man and his work continuing for the rest of his life.<sup>174</sup>

Many people have judged Whitman extraordinary in a variety of ways, but none has made a larger claim for him than Bucke. He believed that Whitman was not only a great writer, but a breakthrough in humanity's psychic and moral evolution comparable to Buddha or Jesus; in fact, Bucke felt that Whitman surpassed even these.<sup>175</sup> Bucke dedicated *Man's Moral Nature* (1879), his first book on his theory of evolving consciousness, "to the man of all men past and present that I have known who has the most exalted moral nature—Walt Whitman."<sup>176</sup>

Bucke's biography of Whitman was an unconventional book, today we would call it a "mix genre work"; as much an anthology of documents about the poet as actual biography. It was also a collaboration: Whitman advised throughout, revised, and wrote significant portions of the book

---

<sup>173</sup> "Richard Maurice Bucke". The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed January 2016. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/bucke/biography/anc.00247.html>.

<sup>174</sup> "Richard Maurice Bucke". The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed January 2016. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/bucke/biography/anc.00247.html>.

<sup>175</sup> "Richard Maurice Bucke". The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed January 2016. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/bucke/biography/anc.00247.html>.

<sup>176</sup> "Richard Maurice Bucke". The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed January 2016. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/bucke/biography/anc.00247.html>.

himself. Whitman visited Bucke in Ontario for four months in 1880.<sup>177</sup> The two traveled together down the St. Lawrence River, and the following year, in preparation for the biography, they visited places important in Whitman's youth.<sup>178</sup> However, even after Whitman drafted parts and edited much of it, he still did not think the book created a truthful portrait of him. Whitman was also uncomfortable, understandably so, even for Whitman, with Bucke's inclination to view him as a demi-god. Whitman's replaced such claims, emphasizing instead his robust personality.

Besides his literary efforts on Whitman's behalf, Bucke was also a medical consultant throughout the last years of the poet's life. Their correspondence includes a steady stream of advice from Bucke, who also treated Whitman directly when he visited.<sup>179</sup> He was on hand during a crisis in 1888, and Whitman credited Bucke with having brought him through.<sup>180</sup> Bucke's role was not only that of a disciple and mystical apostle; he was also an extremely dependable, knowledgeable, and practical man, and a loyal friend. Even after Whitman's death, Bucke continued to devote time and energy to writing, editing, and overseeing the publication of Whitman materials and, along with Horace Traubel and Thomas Harned, he served as one of Whitman's literary executor.<sup>181</sup>

### 2.2.2 Walt Whitman in Italy

Luigii Gamberale, *Foglie d'erba con le due aggiunte e gli "Echi della vecchiaia"*

---

<sup>177</sup> "Richard Maurice Bucke". The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed January 2016. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/bucke/biography/anc.00247.html>.

<sup>178</sup> "Richard Maurice Bucke". The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed January 2016. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/bucke/biography/anc.00247.html>.

<sup>179</sup> Traubel, Horace. *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, Wednesday, May 9, 1888, 128. The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed January 2017. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/traubel/WWWiC/1/whole.html>

<sup>180</sup> Traubel, Horace. *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, Sunday, June 10, 1888, 297. The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed January 2017. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/traubel/WWWiC/1/whole.html>

<sup>181</sup> "Richard Maurice Bucke". The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed January 2016. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/bucke/biography/anc.00247.html>.

Luigi Gamberale.



Gamberale / pinterest.com

The Italian translation is the launch of *Leaves of Grass*, in translations, in continental Europe. The translation, by Luigi Gamberale, *Foglie d'erba con le due aggiunte e gli "Echi della vecchiaia"* (Gamberale, *Canti scelti di Walt Whitman*, (Milano: Sonzogno, 1887), (dell'edizione 1900 and 1907), preceded the first complete *Leaves of Grass* into German, *Grashalme*, published in 1889. One also notes that since this first Italian translation, with some but few and most certainly not long-lasting detractors, Whitman in Italy has been quite the public's poet, poet's poet and critic's poet.<sup>182</sup> There was another full translation of *Leaves of Grass*, well-received, and by general consent, very different from Gamberale's, by Enzo Giachino, in 1950. How then did Italy, with its strong Catholic component, which might leave one believing it would never be one of the first to come to this work, become, in fact, this welcoming home for Whitman's poetry?

According to Rea McCain, in her Italica article "Walt Whitman in Italy", "Walt Whitman's introduction to Italian readers came about casually."<sup>183</sup> She goes on to credit Theresa Bentzen's

---

<sup>182</sup> Asselineau, Roger, "Whitman in Italy". *Walt Whitman and the World*, (Iowa City: Iowa University Press, 1995), 269.

<sup>183</sup> McCain, Rea. *Italica*, Vol 20, No.1 (Mar 1943), 4. American Association of Teachers of Italian. DOI 10.2307.476681.

article, “Un poète américain”, which included some of Bentzen’s own translations of Whitman, in La Revue des Deux Mondes, (June 1872), which Girolamo Pegusa-Moleti, a Sicilian writer, came across, read and shared with colleagues such as Enrico Nencioni telling him:”E una voce nouva veramente la voce di aqesto poeta.”<sup>184</sup> Nencioni would whole-heartedly agree and his future articles examining and often praising Whitman, according to Roger Asselineau, not only “launched Whitman in Italy” – but concurrently won congratulations from poets Carducci and d’Annunzio, and encouraged the translator Luigi Gamberale to set out on his own translation of Whitman.<sup>185</sup>

In her doctoral thesis, "A Study of the Two Complete Translations of Walt Whitman’s "Leaves of Grass" Into Italian" (1981), Grazia Soltis puts forth that Gamberale imports Whitman into an Italian literary scene affected by the Scapigliatura movement, a movement which challenged the entrenched classicism of the time.<sup>186</sup> For her, even the official poet of that age, Giosue Carducci, was torn by the dilemma of classicist rhetoric versus freer and fresher form, thus Gamberale, holding Carducci in high esteem, set about making a "scapigliato" poet of Whitman in keeping with these more avant-garde tastes of his times.<sup>187</sup> Gamberale’s perspective on Whitman’s work, and on his own as its translator, finds a welcoming readership in the outstanding poets of late nineteenth-century Italy: Carducci, Giovanni Pascoli and Gabriele d'Annunzio. In turn, their readiness to accept the American revolutionary poet – mainly, though not exclusively, through

---

<sup>184</sup> McCain, Rea. *Italica*, 7.

<sup>185</sup> Asselineau, Roger, “Whitman in Italy, 269.

<sup>186</sup> Sotis, Grazia, "A Study of the Two Complete Translations of Walt Whitman’s "Leaves of Grass into Italian" (1981) *Doctoral Dissertations*. AAI8203058. Abstract. Accessed February 2016.  
<http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/dissertations/AAI8203058>.

<sup>187</sup> Sotis, "A Study of the Two Complete Translations of Walt Whitman’s "Leaves of Grass into Italian", Abstract.

Gamberale, Soltis argues - largely rested on the affinity of much of their work, at its un-academic best, to the structural novelty of *Leaves of Grass*.<sup>188</sup>

Asselineau points out that many Italians, however – as, I would argue, the Germans, and as Cebrià Montoliu, and as many readers would and still today are - seemed more interested in discussing the ideological implications of the poems, rather than their form or aesthetic merits.<sup>189</sup>

Ulisse Ortens emphasized the “evangelical” quality of Whitman’s humanitarianism while Giulio Pisa, in his “Studi Letterari” (1899) welcomed Whitman as a prophet and superior to Emerson for his *impulso vitale*.<sup>190</sup> Rabizzani considered Whitman’s idea of democracy as one based on individualism and identity, and Whitman’s self seemed to mysteriously coincide with everyone’s self, that he was “not a mere being, but a symbol”.<sup>191</sup>



pavese / zam.it

Enthusiasm can make for strange bedfellows, and in the post-wars years, Whitman was co-opted by both extremes of the political spectrum. In his 1933 essay, however, Cesare Pavese, who had discovered Whitman in his adolescence and chose him for his doctorate topic at the University of

---

<sup>188</sup> Sotis, "A Study of the Two Complete Translations of Walt Whitman’s "Leaves of Grass into Italian", Abstract.

<sup>189</sup> Asselineau, Roger, “Whitman in Italy, 270.

<sup>190</sup> Asselineau, Roger, “Whitman in Italy, 270.

<sup>191</sup> Asselineau, Roger, “Whitman in Italy, 270.

Turin, tried to add some nuance to both Whitman's persona and work. He was personally attracted to Whitman's bold self-confidence and his vital acceptance of modern life, but at the same time argued against the canonization of Whitman, insisting on his complexity as an artist unable to live out the primitive poetry he imagined, but imagining it all the same: "He did not make the primitive poem he dreamed, but the poem of this dream...to spell out the apparent paradox, he made poetry out of making poetry".<sup>192</sup> Later, such as Glauco Cambon, Sergio Perosa, Francesca Orestano Vanni and Marina Camboni would go on to make their important contributions to the discussion as well.

For the translator and critic Marina Camboni, for example, as per her article, "Italian translations of "Poets to Come"", the Italian translations highlight the complexity and the ambiguity of this poem.<sup>193</sup> Among the five existing translations of "Poets to Come," those by Luigi Gamberale, Enzo Giachino, and Ariodante Marianni are part of a representative selection from, or a complete translation of, Whitman's 1881 or 1892 *Leaves of Grass*. The two volumes of *Canti scelti di Walt Whitman* (1887, 1889) and *Foglie di erba: con le due aggiunte e gli Echi della vecchiaia dell'edizione del 1900* (1907) translated by Gamberale, and *Foglie d'erba* (1950) edited and translated by Giachino, and the representative selection translated by Marianni, published in 1988, mark for Camboni, turning points in the reception and domestication of Whitman's work, each responding to different cultural and ideological needs in Italy over the past century and all playing important and well-differentiated roles in the history of Italian culture in particular, and of transatlantic literary exchanges, in general<sup>194</sup>

---

<sup>192</sup> Asselineau, Roger, "Whitman in Italy, 271 and ampoarchive.wordpress.com, February 2016.

<sup>193</sup> Camboni, Marina. "Italian translations of "Poets to Come"", The Walt Whitman Archive, 2012. Accessed February 2016. <http://whitmanarchive.org/published/foreign/poets/italian/intro.html>

<sup>194</sup> Camboni, "Italian translations of "Poets to Come"", The Walt Whitman Archive.

Luigii Gamberale's "Poeti dell'avvenire"

In the introduction to his influential two-volume edition of selected poems, *Canti scelti*, Gamberale, in a similar vein to Emerson's call to a as-yet-to-be-named-poet-to-come, in 1844, calls on Whitman to renew and reinvigorate the image and the function of the universal poet.<sup>195</sup>

There are three existing versions of Gamberale's "Poeti dell'avvenire": the first was included in the second volume of *Canti scelti*, a cheap edition meant to address a popular reader and, at the time, the largest selection of Whitman's work available in Italian; seventeen years later, in 1907, Gamberale produced a somewhat different text for his *Foglie d'erba con le due aggiunte e gli "Echi della vecchiaia"* (dell'edizione 1900).<sup>196</sup> Both the first and second translations caught the imagination of the Italian public and had to be re-printed, while the second version was applauded by critics and poets for having rid the initial translation of archaic language.<sup>197</sup> Gamberale's third translation appeared in 1923.<sup>198</sup>

Gamberale offered the Italian public a simplified but, importantly, an un-censored modern poet, directing his readers' attention not only to Whitman's democratic ideals and positivistic devotion to science, but to the relevance love and sexuality had in his texts.<sup>199</sup> In Gamberale's view, the US poet offered new and superior models of love and showed "how to love oneself *and* at the same time love the universe *with the most perfect love*."<sup>200</sup> Above all, however, Gamberale had formed the idea that, even though he was *a great poet*, Whitman was *not a great artist*, meaning that he had not artistically crafted his poems. Like most critics in his time, Gamberale believed

---

<sup>195</sup> Camboni, "Italian translations of "Poets to Come"", The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>196</sup> Camboni, "Italian translations of "Poets to Come"", Whitman Archive.

<sup>197</sup> Asselineau, Roger, "Whitman in Italy, 269.

<sup>198</sup> Asselineau, Roger, "Whitman in Italy, 270.

<sup>199</sup> Camboni, "Italian translations of "Poets to Come"", Whitman Archive.

<sup>200</sup> Camboni, "Italian translations of "Poets to Come"", Whitman Archive.



that Whitman's lines were "prose, and nothing else." He thus translated Whitman as if the work was a prose poem and applied to Whitman's English language text the same method of literal translation typical of translations from Latin and Greek, though he also brought to bear on his own choices his deep knowledge of symbolic, figurative, and mythic use of language.<sup>201</sup>

Camboni argues that Gamberale rightly considered Whitman's individualistic credo that was, and is, representative of American democracy, and he thought it was important to introduce this aspect of the work and world into Italian culture, both to help Italy enter modernity and to democratize the newborn nation where centuries of powerful Catholicism had suppressed individual autonomy. Additionally, Whitman's philosophy of direct experience as the source of poetry would also help Italian literature free itself from the formal trappings of a tight-fitting classical heritage, which, in Gamberale's opinion, created a chasm that distanced contemporary Italian poetry from present-day reality.<sup>202</sup>

Gamberale's translation played a major part in the process of reigning in Whitman for Italian society. Conflating the historic man and his poetic persona, Gamberale's translation projected the image of the poet as a robust, virile man, in close touch with his body as well as with his natural and social surroundings.<sup>203</sup> Whitman's modern poetry was also prized over the now considered decadent poetry of nineteenth-century Italy, "boudoir poetry" as Nencioni had termed it.<sup>204</sup> Some of the words Gamberale used to describe the poet as the new "manly man," like *gagliardo*

---

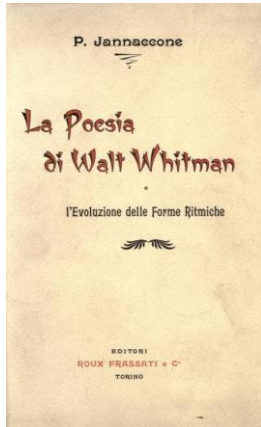
<sup>201</sup> Camboni, "Italian translations of "Poets to Come"", Whitman Archive.

<sup>202</sup> Camboni, "Italian translations of "Poets to Come"", Whitman Archive.

<sup>203</sup> Camboni, "Italian translations of "Poets to Come"", Whitman Archive.

<sup>204</sup> Asselineau, Roger, "Whitman in Italy, 269.

("valiant"), and *camerata* ("comrade"), became popular with the futurists and played ideological roles in the fascist era.<sup>205</sup>



ia802608.us.archive.org

Pasquale Jannaccone's *La poesia di Walt Whitman e l'evoluzione delle forme ritmiche*<sup>206</sup>

It is worth side-stepping the timeline of Italian translations of Whitman, fascinating, as it is, to remind the reader that Montoliu had read Gamberale's translation as well as Pasquale Jannaccone's *La poesia di Walt Whitman e l'evoluzione delle forme ritmiche*, a critical work on Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (and, according to worldcat.org, eleven editions of which were published between the edition Montoliu likely read from, that of 1898, and 1973). Both works are listed in Montoliu's bibliography to his own study of Whitman, referred to in the text, and, in the case of Jannaccone's ideas on Whitman's metrics, cited at length.<sup>207</sup> Jannaccone was an economist and, later, a Senator for life.<sup>208</sup> His examination of Whitman's verse was not only one

---

<sup>205</sup> Camboni, "Italian translations of "Poets to Come"", Whitman Archive.

<sup>206</sup> Pasquale Jannaccone. *La poesia di Walt Whitman e l'evoluzione delle forme ritmiche*.

(Torino : Frassati, 1898). Archive.org. Accessed June 2016. <https://archive.org/details/lpoesidiwaltwhit00janniala>

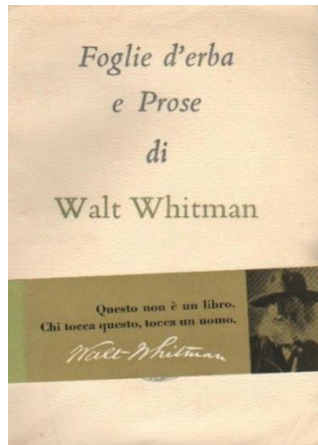
<sup>207</sup> See, in particular, section "Art Poetica", 1640170, in Montoliu's essay and the section, by the same name, of this dissertation.

<sup>208</sup> "Pasquale Jannaccone". Wikipedia, Italian. Accessed March 2017.

[https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pasquale\\_Jannaccone](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pasquale_Jannaccone).

of the first, but has remained one of the few and far between which put the metrics before the man. Montoliu found it to be a “minuciós anàlisi” of Whitman’s metrics and music.<sup>209</sup>

Enzo Giachino's "O poeti venturi"



libriadiifrusali.it

For the next sixty-three years, Gamberale's translations dominated the Italian scene and, through Whitman, helped usher modern free verse into Italian poetry. But, during the fascist era and through World War II, leftist intellectuals, many of them communists, looked at American democracy as the antidote to fascism and read US literature - akin to Montoliu leaving what he saw as a constricting Spain, with, in passing, perhaps some of his closest colleagues' veer to the right? - for the US, as if it were a gateway to freedom as well as a means of opening up Italy's claustrophobic nationalist or escapist literature.<sup>210</sup> One of these communist intellectuals was the writer Cesare Pavese, who had graduated from the University of Torino with a dissertation on Walt Whitman and was also the editor of the American Literature series published by the Turin publisher Einaudi.<sup>211</sup>

---

<sup>209</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L'home i sa tasca*. (Barcelona: Societat Catalana d'Edicions, 1913), 170.

<sup>210</sup> Camboni, "Italian translations of "Poets to Come"", Whitman Archive.

<sup>211</sup> Camboni, "Italian translations of "Poets to Come"", Whitman Archive.

In this role, Pavese published the second complete translation of *Leaves of Grass* (1891–92), *Foglie d'erba* (1950), edited and translated by Enzo Giachino, who was a translator and academic who had spent a great part of his life teaching in US universities, and thus had direct experience of Italian and US societies and cultures, and a sound mastery of both languages.<sup>212</sup> In ideas similar to Pavese's on Whitman<sup>213</sup>, Giachino's introduction to *Foglie d'erba* Whitman emerges as an artist and, most of all, as the very incarnation of the poet as worker, his early experiences in typesetting, printing, and publishing having prepared him for his *mestiere di poeta*, his workmanship as a poet.<sup>214</sup> Although Giachino's emphasis on writing as work seems indebted to Pavese's influence,<sup>215</sup> his interpretation of Whitman's artistic work as integral to the economic, cultural, and ideological construction of society, tells of the new role writers and intellectuals were expected to play in post-war Italy.<sup>216</sup>

Ariodante Marianni's "Poeti futuri"

Though Giachino's has been the only complete Italian translation of *Leaves of Grass* in print for the past sixty years, other volumes of selected poems have appeared; the most culturally relevant has been *Foglie d'erba*, translated by Ariodante Marianni's, edited by Biancamaria Tedeschini Lalli, with a preface by Giorgio Manganelli. Published in 1988, it is the first translation in Italy to include the English texts of the poems.<sup>217</sup> Moreover, the book contains the most authoritative selection of Whitman's poems in print and demonstrates, too, how Marianni is continuing the

---

<sup>212</sup> Camboni, "Italian translations of "Poets to Come"", Whitman Archive.

<sup>213</sup> See the essay he published in 1951, "Whitman: poesia del far poesia." Pavese's essay was translated by Roger Asselineau and published as "Whitman—Poetry of Poetry Writing" in *Walt Whitman and the World*, edited by Gay Wilson Allen and Ed Folsom (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1995), 274–281.

<sup>214</sup> Camboni, "Italian translations of "Poets to Come"", Whitman Archive.

<sup>215</sup> Sotis, "A Study of the Two Complete Translations of Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass into Italian", Abstract.

<sup>216</sup> Camboni, "Italian translations of "Poets to Come"", Whitman Archive.

<sup>217</sup> Camboni, "Italian translations of "Poets to Come"", Whitman Archive.

relay by, like Giachino's translation having expressed a new era, Marianni's own translation<sup>218</sup> being a reflection of the era of student protests, the workers' movements, and a rekindling of a non-communist leftist culture - and attracting a new readership.<sup>219</sup>

One more feature of the 1988 *Foglie d'erba* is worth mentioning. In her introduction, Tedeschini Lalli advances the Italian re-evaluation of Whitman's poetry: where Giachino had brought to light Whitman's work as a craftsman and artist, Tedeschini Lalli, in tune with F. O. Matthiessen, presents *Leaves of Grass* as a language experiment, emphasizing Whitman's use of language as a form of provocation and his vision of "language as an ever-changing object, a vehicle of a world whose signs and whose meanings are continuously sliding in the intrinsic dynamism of history."<sup>220</sup> By pointing out this fact, Tedeschini Lalli also entertains a dialogue with the Italian "Neo Vanguard" and its formal experimentation with language by offering Whitman as a model. The short preface by Giorgio Manganelli, one of the founders of the famous "Gruppo 63," and a major player in the "Neo Vanguard" movement, serves as evidence of this connection.<sup>221</sup>

### 2.2.3 Walt Whitman in Germany and other German-speaking countries

As Walter Grünzweig states in his article "Whitman in German-Speaking Countries"<sup>222</sup>, to which I am heavily indebted in the following pages, Whitman's German reception cannot be separated from its broader European context, for German reception of Whitman was tied in closely with the international literary and artistic avant-garde from which the culture received important ideas

---

<sup>218</sup> Camboni, notes: "Marianni seems to articulate in his Italian text what John Burroughs wrote about Whitman's poem in his *Conservator* article". See John Burroughs, "Two Critics on Walt Whitman," *Conservator* 6 (1895): 84.

<sup>219</sup> Asselineau, Roger, "Whitman in Italy, 269.

<sup>220</sup> Camboni, notes. Biancamaria Tedeschini Lalli, Introduction to *Foglie d'erba* (Milano: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, 1988), 17, 19

<sup>221</sup> Camboni, "Italian translations of "Poets to Come"", Whitman Archive.

<sup>222</sup> Grünzweig, Walter. "Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries". The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed January 2017. <http://whitmanarchive.org/published/foreign/german/introduction.html>.

and to which it also contributed a good deal. By the same token, the story of Whitman's German reception, and the same could be said for Whitman reception in general, as so many critics attest, goes beyond the literary realm, having an influence on politics and social movements. His life and work seemed to - and seem to continue to – evolve and speak to the *Zeitgeist* of the moment.

Ferdinand Freiligrath [1810–1876]



Freiligrath / de.wikipedia.org

The first German to take notice of Whitman, the same person who would become his first translator, Ferdinand Freiligrath, was a poet, a friend of Marx, and in exile. According to Grünzweig, it took a revolutionary to appreciate Whitman's poetry and to value its socio-political implications and, at this historical moment, it also required an exile to discover Whitman.<sup>223</sup> If Freiligrath had not been in exile, perhaps, like his compatriots, he would have been caught up in this historical moment when Germany and Austria had just emerged from a nationalistic dispute about leadership among the German states, a time of autocratic rule, far removed from the discussion of the artistic and political issues raised in Whitman's poetry. Moreover, although the

---

<sup>223</sup> Grünzweig, Walter. "Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries". The Walt Whitman Archive.

edition of William Rossetti's *Leaves of Grass* (1868) would have undoubtedly eventually made its way east, especially into the hands of an already internationally established translator such as Freiligrath, as he was in London, he was able read it before many others in his country.

Freiligrath's translation of Whitman in the weekend edition of Germany's leading daily, the Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung, consisted of ten poems, most from "Drum-Taps", and they made a strong impression on the reading public, in part, at least, due to the warring political situation in Prussia at the time. Far into the future, as we will see in a limited fashion in these pages, Whitman editions in Germany continued to be inspired by and to emphasize Whitman's connection to a German revolutionary tradition that began with these Freiligrath translations.

Being the practicing and published translator he was, it is no surprise that Whitman and his friends welcomed Freiligrath's translations, modest in quantity as they were. Welcomed them and promoted them...the English translation of Freiligrath's introductory essay to his translations in the Allgemeine Zeitung was facilitated by Whitman's friends, most likely William Douglas O'Connor. As recorded in Traubel's dairy, it was O'Connor who suggested that he write "F.F. a letter...explaining things generally, and making him as far as possible a master of the situation."<sup>224</sup> Freiligrath "said the letter consisted of thirty-two sheets in which O'Connor outlined the "true" character of Whitman's poetry and mission. This is a clear example of the many attempts by Whitmanites to further their poet's overseas reception, and, in this particular case, in line with Whitman's own wish to be heard by the Germanic peoples."

Freiligrath did not parse words in his essay on Whitman:

---

<sup>224</sup> William Douglas O'Connor to Walt Whitman, September 16, 1868.

[Whitman was] *no follower in the beaten track of the European muse but fresh from the prairie and from the earthy smells in hair and beard and clothing of the soil from which he sprang.*<sup>225</sup>

Freiligrath urged his readers to "have a closer look at this strange new comrade, who threatens to overturn our entire *Ars Poetica* and all our theories and canons on the subject of aesthetics."<sup>226</sup>

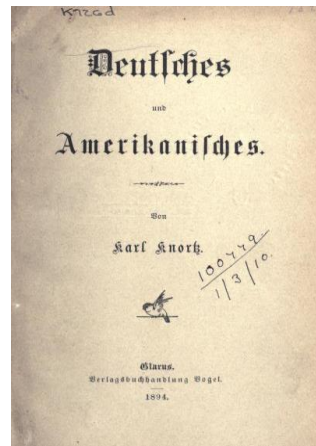
Furthermore, Freiligrath did not shy away from asking questions such as:

*...has the age so much and such serious matter to say, that the old vessels no longer suffice for the new contents? Are we standing before a poetry of the ages to come, just as some years ago a music of the ages to come was announced to us? And is Walt Whitman greater than Richard Wagner?*<sup>227</sup>

Thomas William Rolleston [1857–1920] and Karl Knortz [1841–1918]



Rolleston / readtiger.com



in absence of a photo of Knortz himself / ia300600.us.archive.org

Twenty years passed between Freiligrath's essay and translations and the first book-length German translation appeared—in Switzerland—which, in the later 1880s was a haven for German dissenters. One of the ideological centers of German progressive thinking of this period was a publishing house in Zürich whose owner, Jakob Schabelitz, a friend of Freiligrath's and a radical himself, had published first editions of works by the iconoclastic Viennese poet, critic,

<sup>225</sup> Grünzweig, Walter. "Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries". The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>226</sup> "Walt Whitman's Influence on Germany" <http://www.123helpme.com/view.asp?id=41519>

<sup>227</sup> Grünzweig, Walter. "Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries". The Walt Whitman Archive.



and dramatist Hermann Bahr, as well as the naturalist and socialist poets representative of "Youngest Germany," Karl Henckell and Arno Holz.<sup>228</sup> In other words, ideally suited for a first edition of *Leaves of Grass*.

Thomas William Rolleston was an Irish nationalist and writer Karl Knortz, read by Cebrià Montoliu, was a German immigrant to the United States. Both men, perhaps like Montoliu, were politically motivated in their translation work. Knortz, an educator and cultural historian, worked toward the democratic education of Germans throughout his life for, in his view, both Germans and Americans of German extraction sorely lacked democratic traditions, and he hoped that Whitman's poetry would be more effective than political tracts in changing the minds of his people.<sup>229</sup> Rolleston, for his part, believed that Ireland would be freed from England only if the British Empire were faced with a strong Germany and he insisted that Germans needed to be strengthened politically by thorough training in democracy. He also believed the Germans had lost their native creativity and ingenuity in British positivistic philosophy and this ensuing complacent German bourgeoisie needed to be shocked back into their idealistic philosophical traditions which could, he argued, be achieved through a confrontation with Whitman's poetry. Like Freiligrath, both translators were in close touch with Whitman and his circle of friends.

This first German language edition of *Leaves of Grass*, published in 1889 and entitled *Grashalme*, was received well enough. Grünzweig says that while some critics did admit that they were puzzled about the poems that looked as though they were copied from an encyclopedia, most admitted that something new had arrived on the German literary scene.

---

<sup>228</sup> Grünzweig, Walter. "Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries". The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>229</sup> Grünzweig, Walter. "Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries". The Walt Whitman Archive.

Overall, the book seemed in step with the newness of the New World, which in the minds of most German-speaking Europeans.<sup>230</sup>

### The German Whitman Cult

One of the most avid readers of *Grashalme*, Johannes Schlaf, would become the leader of the German Whitman cult.<sup>231</sup> Together with Arno Holz and Gerhart Hauptmann, German literary history credits Schlaf with the introduction of "naturalist" literary principles into German literature. In his essay on Whitman, written in 1892, Schlaf explains how, through the example of Whitman's poetry, he had been able to escape the limitations of naturalism and discover the richness of his innermost self. He celebrates Whitman as a healer and a prophet of a new age of humanity. We find, too, that he read—and imitated—Whitman's poetry as an answer to the ills of modern existence: urbanization, alienation, and even dissociation of the self. Is this why Darío, Martí, Jorba, Bazalgette, Montoliu and Vasseur would also turn to Whitman in this same era?

Understanding the dangers of modernity's industrialization, Schlaf looked to how Whitman's words could help stave off, or even avoid, what seemed like an oncoming rampage. He celebrated the emergence of a "new humanity" via Walt Whitman. At the same time, he popularized William Douglas O'Connor's version of the "good gray poet," which became Germany's favorite image of Whitman.<sup>232</sup> In Schlaf's many articles on Whitman, in his translation of Henry Bryan Binns's biography of Whitman and other books, he stressed the superhuman quality of the poet, destined to deliver humankind. Schlaf's most important contribution to Whitman's popularity in the German-speaking countries was a widely circulated translation of a representative cross section of *Leaves of Grass* published in 1907 in a cheap,

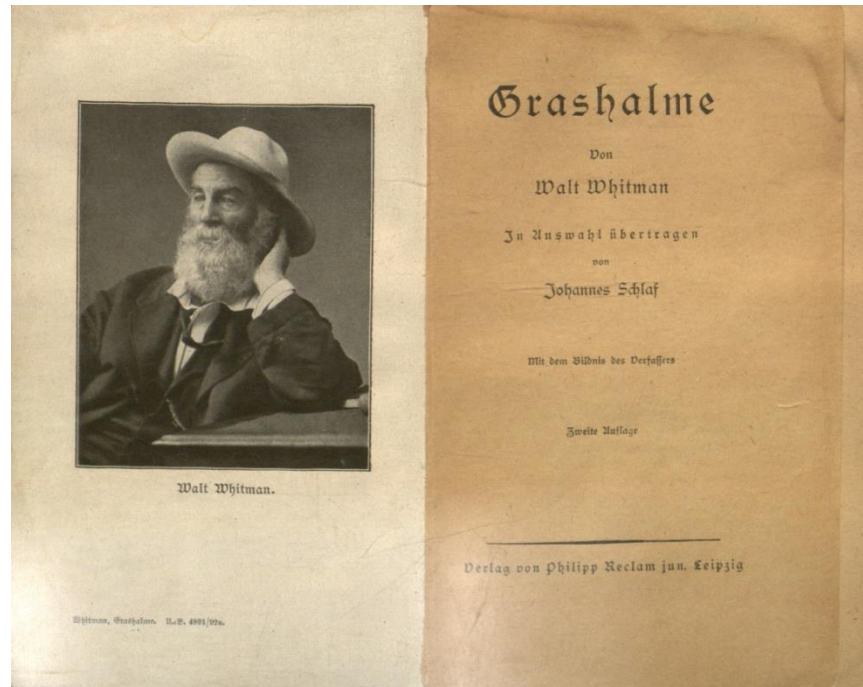
---

<sup>230</sup> Grünzweig, Walter. "Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries". The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>231</sup> Ferrier, Ute. "Walt Whitman's Influence on Germany". Binghamton.edu.

<sup>232</sup> Grünzweig, Walter. "Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries". The Walt Whitman Archive.

(very) popular edition<sup>233</sup> – obviously a man after Whitman’s own heart, he who had always imagined his reader walking about town or the countryside with a copy of *Leaves of Grass* in a back pocket.



its.brandeis.edu

## Psychopathology

Along with Traubel, Schlaf shared a true partisan devotion to Whitman, although Schlaf and others did believe it necessary to "defend" Whitman against all negative criticisms: such critics were automatically denounced as "enemies."<sup>234</sup> One such person, and Schlaf's archenemy, was Eduard Bertz, who had come to know Whitman during an early stay in the United States and, after his return, published an article in 1889 in which he praised Whitman exuberantly and which he then sent to Whitman, along with the promise that he was going to "reveal" Whitman to the German people.

<sup>233</sup> Grünzweig, Walter. "Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries". The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>234</sup> Grünzweig, Walter. "Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries". The Walt Whitman Archive.

In 1905, Bertz published a long article on Whitman's homoeroticism, referring to him as a sexually inactive homosexual and although not intended as such, Bertz's article was perceived by Whitman's followers, especially Schlaf, as an attack on the poet. Schlaf wrote a furious pamphlet in which he accused Bertz of slandering Whitman; Bertz misunderstood and believed that Schlaf and the "terrorists" of the heterosexual world wanted to repress Whitman's homosexuality in order to thwart the movement for homosexual emancipation; and Bertz went on to write two books attempting to prove not only Whitman's homosexuality, but also the existence of a plot by Whitmanites around the world to silence him.

#### Socialism, Anarchism, Erotocracy

Apart from whatever effect the debate may have had on homosexual emancipation, Schlaf's eventual "victory" over Bertz was important for Whitman's continued popularity in the German-speaking countries. If Schlaf had not managed to deny Bertz's well-meant allegations, Whitman would probably not have been accepted in the German-speaking countries—the prejudices against homosexuality and homosexuals being too strong in Central Europe at that time.<sup>235</sup> By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, then, Whitman's importance in the development of German literature and German thinking was taken for granted.

The German expressionists reported the enthusiasm with which they welcomed Schlaf's translation of Whitman. This small booklet *did* fit in every pocket and was thus carried around by numerous activists: socialists, who found that Whitman supplied the much-needed spiritual dimension Marx had abolished; anarchists, who admired Whitman's refusal of aesthetic conventions as much as his call for disobedience and moral independence; members of the

---

<sup>235</sup> Grünzweig, Walter. "Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries". The Walt Whitman Archive.

influential youth movement, the “*Wandervögel*”, who accepted enthusiastically Whitman's call to take to the "open road"; and even nudists, some who took passages from Whitman's poetry quite literally.



Landauer / dadaweb.de

Gustave Landauer (1870-1919), friend of Martin Buber, and a pacifist, who, according to Grünzweig, gave much thought to questions of human alienation and spiritual impoverishment, believed Whitman's poetry would provide the *Geist* Landauer predicted would serve as a guiding light for a new peaceful society based on small units of production, self-managed economic enterprises, and a daily routine requiring each member of society to be engaged in both intellectual and manual labor. Already within the capitalist system, small pockets with "new" human beings could develop, people committed not to nationhood but to a new way of living. When Landauer referred to Americans as a new and exemplary type of nation, he meant they would overcome the old nationalism in a new community comprising all nations. Echoes of Montoliu here as well...Before finishing his translations of Whitman, Landauer was arrested and killed in W.W. I. In the United States, he was described as:

*A poet, a crusader, with the passionate dreaming soul of 1848. A sensitive man, a man whom everyone loved; a devoted admirer of Walt Whitman, whose work he made known*

*to Germany. . . . It was Walt Whitman and Tolstoy, never Marx and Lassalle, whom he hoped to realize in a new Bavaria.*<sup>236</sup>

Landauer's Whitman translations were finally collected and published in a slender volume by Wolff in 1922.<sup>237</sup>



Bahr / zam.it

Hermann Bahr (1863-1934), mentioned above, was an Austrian critic and dramatist and leader of the modernist members of the "Young Vienna" group (the term "modernism" in the artistic sense is sometimes attributed to Bahr), he attempted to break ground with any new movement that would further artistic and aesthetic progress. In a 1908 essay, he welcomed a new "barbarianism" in literature which was, in his view, the only adequate answer to the challenges brought about by emerging technological realities. Arts and humanities, he believed, were firmly grounded in old nineteenth-century traditions and thus were unable to cope with these challenges. If a later generation looked to art and literature to explain and interpret his period, only one author could be said to have given expression to this new era—Whitman.

In another essay, Bahr stressed the fact that Whitman sings the "modern man." But Whitman's message had by now acquired broader meaning and appeal. Both Germany and Austria had

---

<sup>236</sup> Grünzweig, Walter. "Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries". The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>237</sup> Grünzweig, Walter. "Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries". The Walt Whitman Archive.

become democratic republics, and intellectuals in both countries had to find a new place in their changing societies. What is the artist's place in a democratic society? What is the nature of democratic art? The questions that had so intensely preoccupied American romantics in their struggle for national literature now came to the Europeans. Related questions of nationalism preoccupied them as well. After the old monarchies fell, Central Europe presented itself as a colorful quilt of dozens of nations and nationalities. How would they relate to each other? The answers Bahr found in Whitman are original and explain, in part, Whitman's enormous popularity in the years following World War I. The artist would have to be the universal human mediator between individuals, classes, and nations.

Bahr emphasized admiringly, that for him, Whitman perceived reality through his sensuality- "philosophizes with the phallus" and Hans Reisiger (1884–1968), one of the great translators of the twentieth century and to whom German readers owe the "classic" two-volume translation of Whitman's work, expressed it much the same way. Reisiger encountered Whitman as early as 1909 and published his first translations in the leftist journal Das Forum at the beginning of World War I.<sup>238</sup> In the introduction to his first edition of Whitman's works, Reisiger emphasizes that only a quasi-erotic relationship among men and women could actually make German democracy work.

Reisiger shared his passion for Whitman with his close friend Thomas Mann, who publicly welcomed the publication of Reisiger's translation, had up until that time been politically conservative. With the breakdown of the Central European monarchies, he had to redefine his position, which he did with the aid of Whitman. Democracy, he now believed, could work only if the traditional hierarchical order could be replaced by an erotic commonwealth, that is, eroticism

---

<sup>238</sup> Grünzweig, Walter. "Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries". The Walt Whitman Archive.

and sexuality—the common denominators of all human beings—could serve as a glue to keep democratic society from disintegrating. In a series of surprisingly public statements, Mann and Reisiger both referred to the attachment of man to man as the "heartbeat of true democracy" and as the "life nerve of communal life of the future in all states and cities".<sup>239</sup>

With Reisiger's attractive two-volume edition, for which Mann wrote an open letter that appeared on page one of the leading German dailies, Whitman had become a "classic" and was, as such, now a recognized part of "world literature," a household word—at least in the households of the educated, artists, and intellectuals. This, however, according to Grünzweig, also meant that the reception of his work became less spontaneous and dramatic. While Whitman's passionate rhetoric was much in demand in the turbulences associated with the war (when scores of German poets, mostly "messianic expressionists," imitated Whitman), the post-expressionistic poets of the "*Neue Sachlichkeit*" (New Objectivity) had much less affinity with the vitality of the American bard.<sup>240</sup>

Although there were two or three attempts to enlist Whitman for the national-socialist ideology by turning him into a "Germanic bard," he stressed democracy and internationalism too often to be useful to the ideology of the Third Reich. Post-W.W. II, Whitman's reception in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), on the other hand, was a special case for, although the GDR was a country professing a "messianic" ideology, and even with the excellent translation by the GDR author Erich Arendt (who had come know Whitman during his exile in Latin America), there is hardly a trace of the passion of the earlier translations. Rather, Whitman seems to have been

---

<sup>239</sup> Grünzweig, Walter. "Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries". The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>240</sup> Grünzweig, Walter. "Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries". The Walt Whitman Archive.



important as a representative of a foreign culture that GDR residents had little access to, and a point of convergence between the interests of younger readers and the state cultural policies.

### Responding to Whitman in German

Although Whitman's reception since World War II has not equaled the enthusiasm of the years between 1889 and 1925, he is still today considered a “classic” author, he and his work are well-studied at German-language universities, and his poetry continues to provoke important reactions on the part of creative writers themselves, with German poets from that time period up until the present day responding to his work frequently and energetically. While not all can be treated here, the following follows the trajectory up until Johannes R. Becher, whose interest in Whitman, according to Grünzweig, helped insure the poet's "survival" in the GDR.<sup>241</sup>

Christian Morgenstern (1871–1914), a poet, translator, and journalist, had a number of uses for Whitman's poetry, to which we can attest in this poem "The Democratic Song of My Room," Morgenstern's parody of Whitman's poetry, which mocks the reception of Whitman by German “stuffy” bourgeoisie, more than it satirizes Whitman's poetry.

In 1910, Arthur Drey (1890-1965), a businessman, contributed, during his brief literary career, to the expressionist journals Der Sturm and Die Aktion.<sup>242</sup> His poem "Walt Whitman" demonstrates the expressionists' exaggerated adoration of Whitman as a God-like human being and poet. These characterizations of Whitman as "Titan" or, in the poem by Carl Albert Lange, "Giant", suggest the degree to which the individual is dwarfed by modern technology and industry.<sup>243</sup>

---

<sup>241</sup> Grünzweig, Walter. “Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries”. The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>242</sup> Grünzweig, Walter. “Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries”. The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>243</sup> Grünzweig, Walter. “Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries”. The Walt Whitman Archive.

The two poems by Swiss writers Gustav Gamper (1873–1948) and Hans Reinhart (1880–1963) appeared next to each other in a Swiss literary journal in 1919, along with Gamper's woodcut of Whitman.<sup>244</sup> These poems are more constrained and devout, exuding a feeling of religiosity, but otherwise they are very similar to the exaggerated diction of the expressionists. Gamper is best known for his work *Die Brücke Europas (The Bridge of Europe)*, a Whitmanesque attempt to create a kind of modern national "epic" devoted to his homeland. Reinhart, a friend of Gamper's, devoted his career to poetry, drama, and prose, and translated individual poems by Whitman.

Not all Germans, however, were completely uncritical admirers of Whitman. In 1926, Kurt Tucholsky (1890-1935), one of the great German satirists, wrote a parody of "Salut au Monde!"<sup>245</sup> Tucholsky frequently used "Ignaz Wrobel" as a pseudonym and the "Walt Wrobel" in the poem is Tucholsky turned into Whitman—or the other way around. Whitman's spiritualized epistemological optimism is shown to be unfounded; the wealth of all appearances could not possibly be grasped by the five senses, and, in any case, the senses mediate mainly one thing—pain. Whitman's global panorama is here replaced by ridiculous local observations from the author's everyday life, but, in spite of this parody's implicit biting criticism, Tucholsky, like other writers critical of Whitman's optimism, nonetheless admired the American as a great poet.

A sonnet to Whitman by Johannes R. Becher (1891–1958) was probably written in the early 1940s when he was in Soviet exile. In his youth, Becher was a devout Whitmanite; later he programmatically declared his conversion from Whitman to Marx and Lenin, although, like many Marxists, he continued to admire Whitman. First Minister of Culture in the GDR, Becher

---

<sup>244</sup> Grünzweig, Walter. "Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries". The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>245</sup> Grünzweig, Walter. "Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries". The Walt Whitman Archive.

was an influential, cultural politician, whose interest in Whitman helped insure the poet's "survival" in the GDR.<sup>246</sup>

#### 2.2.4 Whitman in France and among French speakers

##### The Translators

After Whitman's lecture on Lincoln in Madison Square Theater, April 14, 1887,<sup>247</sup> he was shown a Paris journal with the symbolist's Jules Laforgue's translation of "Children of Adam" to which Whitman responded: "I was sure that a Frenchman would hit upon that part."<sup>248</sup>

As Éric Athenot and Blake Bronson-Bartlett state in their article, "Whitman futur, ou l'avenir à venir: "Poets to Come" in French Translation,"<sup>249</sup> "Poets to Come" was among the first of Whitman's poems translated in 1886 by Jules Laforgue - the first French poems ever written in *vers libre* – in the avant-garde periodical La Vogue, which, shortly after, would introduce the world to Rimbaud's Illuminations.<sup>250</sup> It appeared with other poems from the "Inscriptions" cluster in the June 28, 1886 issue and was followed by two further installments in the July 5 and August 2 issues.<sup>251</sup> In 1887, Laforgue, through his friend R. Brisbane, obtained permission from Whitman and his future executors to produce a French translation of *Leaves of Grass* in its entirety, however, Laforgue contracted tuberculosis and died the same year. All of Laforgue's translations were later republished in *Walt Whitman: Œuvres choisies*, in the 1918 Nouvelle

---

<sup>246</sup> Grünzweig, Walter. "Whitman in the German-Speaking Countries". The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>247</sup> "Topics in Chronicling America: Walt Whitman". Library of Congress. Accessed November 2015. <http://www.loc.gov/rr/news/topics/waltwhitman.html>.

<sup>248</sup> Kaplan, Justin. *Walt Whitman: A Life*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), 30.

<sup>249</sup> Athenot, Eric, and Blake Bronson-Bartlett. "Whitman futur, ou l'avenir à venir: 'Poets to Come' in French Translation." Walt Whitman Archive, whitmanarchive.org, 2012. [Examines all the published French translations of "Poets to Come" from 1886 to the present; offers background on the translators; and analyzes the cultural and poetic significance of the variations in the translations.]. Accessed November 2015.

<sup>250</sup> Athenot, Eric, and Blake Bronson-Bartlett. "Whitman futur, ou l'avenir à venir: 'Poets to Come' in French Translation." Walt Whitman Archive, whitmanarchive.org.

<sup>251</sup> Athenot, Eric, and Blake Bronson-Bartlett. "Whitman futur, ou l'avenir à venir: 'Poets to Come' in French Translation." Walt Whitman Archive, whitmanarchive.org.

*Revue Française* edition, along with translations by Valéry Larbaud, André Gide, Louis Fabulet, Jean Schlumberger, and Francis Viéle-Griffin.<sup>252</sup>



Laforgue /babelio.com

Laforgue had learned about Whitman when he was working as a French reader for the Empress of Germany, thanks to Thérèse Bentzon's 1872 article, "Un poète américain, Walt Whitman: 'muscle and pluck forever,'" a moralistic critique of the poet's relatively crude naturalism and democratic vision. Bentzon did not deter the young Laforgue, who had started publishing poetry after having dedicated more time to his art, once he failed his baccalaureat for the third time, and Whitman's influence is apparent in his first book of poetry, *Complaintes* (1885), which contains some of Whitman's integration of urban, cosmic, and scientific themes.<sup>253</sup>

---

<sup>252</sup> Athenot, Eric, and Blake Bronson-Bartlett. "Whitman futur, ou l'avenir à venir: 'Poets to Come' in French Translation." Walt Whitman Archive, whitmanarchive.org.

<sup>253</sup> Athenot, Eric, and Blake Bronson-Bartlett. "Whitman futur, ou l'avenir à venir: 'Poets to Come' in French Translation." Walt Whitman Archive, whitmanarchive.org.



[commons.wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org)

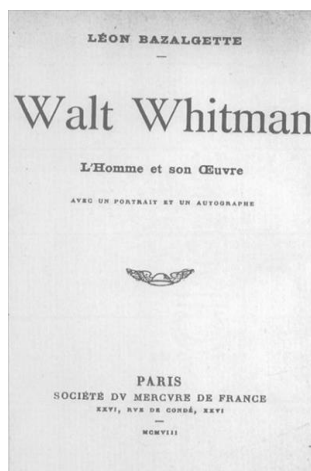
In 1909, Léon Bazalgette, the French critic and translator, and also biographer of Emile Verhaeren, published with la Société Mercure de France, the first – and until today, only - complete French edition of the 1891–92 *Leaves of Grass*.<sup>254</sup> Bazalgette’s translation played a tremendous role in disseminating Whitman among continental European intellectuals and people of letters, including Cebrià Montoliu and Álvaro Armando Vasseur, the two who would go onto to translate significant parts of *Leaves of Grass* themselves. If, in his introduction to his translation of a collection of Whitman’s poems, Vasseur would like us to forget Bazalgette, or forget the French translator’s influence on him (see Bloom, *Anxiety of Influence*) perhaps lumping him with those ““«*poetas sociales*» en Francia” to which he refers,<sup>255</sup> Montoliu, to the contrary, recognizing his own placement in the sharing of Whitman and his work with a broader audience, begins his introduction to his *Walt Whitman: L’home i sa tasca* with:

---

<sup>254</sup> Athenot, Eric, and Blake Bronson-Bartlett. “Whitman futur, ou l’avenir à venir: ‘Poets to Come’ in French Translation.” Walt Whitman Archive, [whitmanarchive.org](http://whitmanarchive.org).

<sup>255</sup> See “Walt Whitman in Spain and Latin America” in this dissertation.

*Homenatge splendid, anc que tardà, de la llengua francesa a la memoria d'un poeta extraordinari, és la tradcció completa de les seves obres que, deguda a l'autoritzada ploma de Lléo Bazalgette, ha publicat « la Societat del Mercure de France ».*<sup>256</sup>



dbnl.org

In fact, Bazalgette's 1909 translation of Whitman's work followed his 1908 biography, *Walt Whitman: l'homme et son œuvre*,<sup>257</sup> but would precede the 1921 book-length essay, *Le Poème-Évangile de Walt Whitman*.<sup>258</sup> And, like Montoliu would go onto to do for his study on Whitman, Bazalgette cited the H.B. Binns' biography on Whitman, Traubel's record of his days with Whitman, Traubel's monthly magazine, the Conservator, as well as writings by Burroughs, Bucke, Carpenter, Kennedy and O'Connor. The presentation of Whitman's life is terre à terre – Bazalgette refers to Whitman as “Walt” throughout – and chatty. Here, some representative excerpts, first, from the chapter, “Années d'enfance et d'apprentissage”, when Whitman leaves teaching definitively, and, also, in the end, Long Island:

*Walt avait vingt-deux ans lorsqu'il quitta sa classe et son île pour retourner à New York. D'autres ambitions s'éveillent en lui, que le professorat n'était pas de nature à satisfaire. L'adolescence était close et avec elle les années d'apprentissage. Un plus vaste champ*

<sup>256</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L'home i sa tasca*. (Barcelona: Societat Catalana d'Edicions, 1913), 2.

<sup>257</sup> Bazalgette, Léon. *Walt Whitman: l'homme et son œuvre*. (Paris: Mercure de France, 1908).

<sup>258</sup> Bazalgette, Léon. *Le poème évangile de Walt Whitman*. (Paris: Mercure de France, 1921).

*d'expérience lui était ouvert, ou nous allons le voir bientôt s'épanouir au contact des hommes et des choses et atteindre sa plénitude.*<sup>259</sup>

And, from "Le Bon Poète aux Cheveux Gris (Washington 1865-1873)", here is Bazalgette reporting - and imagining, as he does often in this work - some scenes from Whitman's life alongside Peter Doyle:

*Le poète, amoureux de la musique, emmenait son « fiston » au concert naval, et c'était toujours lui qui l'entraînait en quelque escapade; parfois ils allaient au marché, achetaient aux paysannes un melon et s'asseyaient sur le pas d'une porte, en pleine rue, pour le déguster...Il arrivait à Walt d'entretenir son compagnon de la grande affaire de sa vie, ses poèmes, et de lui expliquer, en se mettant à sa portée, son effort et son idée. Doyle écoutait, sans trop comprendre où il voulait en venir...*<sup>260</sup>

And, here, in "L'âme de Walt", a section concentrating also on the time period of the 1880's:

*Après tout il suffisait de le regarder, de serrer sa grande main, de l'entendre prononcer quelques paroles de bienvenue, pour avoir l'explication, la plus satisfaisante qu'il fût possible, de son œuvre et de sa personne...le jeune dieu barbare s'était peu à peu métamorphosé en ce Père Eternel, qui, dans la maisonnette de Mickle Street, semblait rayonner sur le monde ou recommencer ses courses d'antan parmi les humanités et les paysages.*<sup>261</sup>

For Athenot and Bronson-Bartlett, like Dr. Richard Maurice Bucke's chapter on Whitman in his *Cosmic Consciousness (1894)*, Bazalgette's biography casts the poet in the role of an ecstatic pantheist and prophet of the modern world and this image of the poet inspired both French proponents of "unanism," who celebrated the collective soul of the masses, as well as the writers of the "Abbaye" group, who, in their projects, explored the connections between humankind and nature.<sup>262</sup> While these two groups helped Bazalgette spread Whitman's overall influence among artists and intellectuals, Bazalgette's publisher, the well-respected *Mercure de France*, insured

---

<sup>259</sup> Bazalgette, Léon. *Walt Whitman: l'homme et son œuvre*, 42.

<sup>260</sup> Bazalgette, Léon. *Walt Whitman: l'homme et son œuvre*, 270.

<sup>261</sup> Bazalgette, Léon. *Walt Whitman: l'homme et son œuvre*, 416.

<sup>262</sup> Athenot, Eric, and Blake Bronson-Bartlett. "Whitman futur, ou l'avenir à venir: 'Poets to Come' in French Translation." Walt Whitman Archive, whitmanarchive.org.

the wide acceptance, in terms of translation, by the general reading public.<sup>263</sup> I would argue that the approachable, “homey” tone of the work also helped word spread.

Bazalgette’s translation of *Leaves of Grass* was also popular and, because of this fact, was exposed to the criticism of the French literati who had already read Whitman in English. For example, Bazalgette captures some of the vernacular style of the English, but his phrasing often does not capture Whitman's brevity and directness, and, on the other hand, he sometimes employs a few stilted archaic constructions. On a more thematic bent, one of the most notable among Bazalgette's critics was the writer André Gide, who accused Bazalgette of "heterosexualizing" Whitman.<sup>264</sup> In his *Corydon* (1911; 1922), for instance, Gide's surrogate, Dr. Corydon, argues that Bazalgette's translation contravenes the true intentions of Whitman's poetry and fails to grasp its emotional intensities due to Bazalgette’s denying and suppressing the poet's clear promotion of male-male affection. As mentioned above, Laforgue’s translations were also edited and published as *Walt Whitman: Œuvres choisies* (1918) in reaction against the Bazalgette translation. Although French and American critics have been, and continue to be, critical of Bazalgette's translation of Whitman, despite this attempts in 1922 at a variation on his original translation,<sup>265</sup> his translations was nonetheless responsible for sparking a national passion for Whitman as well as a generative controversy among readers of the poet's work in France in the early twentieth century.<sup>266</sup>

---

<sup>263</sup> Athenot, Eric, and Blake Bronson-Bartlett. “Whitman futur, ou l’avenir à venir: ‘Poets to Come’ in French Translation.” Walt Whitman Archive, whitmanarchive.org.

<sup>264</sup> Athenot, Eric, and Blake Bronson-Bartlett. “Whitman futur, ou l’avenir à venir: ‘Poets to Come’ in French Translation.” Walt Whitman Archive, whitmanarchive.org.

<sup>265</sup> Athenot, Eric, and Blake Bronson-Bartlett. “Whitman futur, ou l’avenir à venir: ‘Poets to Come’ in French Translation.” Walt Whitman Archive, whitmanarchive.org.

<sup>266</sup> Athenot, Eric, and Blake Bronson-Bartlett. “Whitman futur, ou l’avenir à venir: ‘Poets to Come’ in French Translation.” Walt Whitman Archive, whitmanarchive.org.





They also, strikingly, inspired reactions in the US. On page one of the New York Times Saturday Review of Books of April 17, 1909 (and next to a review of a George Meredith biography on Swinburne, the latter, a reference for both Whitman and Montoliu), one can read the review “Whitman Cult in France”.<sup>267</sup> It is not long, although of similar length of many of the other review on the page, and well worth, I believe, quoting at length:

*A Walt Whitman cult in France is the latest attempt at a new French “literary movement” which seems to be meeting with rather doubtful success. A year ago, the movement was started by Léon Bazalgette through the publication of an exhaustive biography in 500 octavo pages...this has been followed by a translation in two volumes...and now M. Bazalgette plans an interpretation of “Feuilles d’Herbe” to be called: “Walt Whitman: Le Poète-Prophète” which will be followed by a translation of Whitman’s prose works...One of the hopes of these French Whitmanites is that the American poet whom they are trying to introduce to their countrymen will become an inspiration “in this hour when the patriotism of so many is shriveling”. To help on this Whitman crusade, M. Bazalgette has organized courses of public readings of “Feuilles d’Herbe” for the working people, in the Universities Populaires. So far, however, these working people are reported to have been somewhat conspicuous by their absence from the literary treat offered them, while those who do come to the readings are described as listening with “blank faces and a decided disinclination to applaud”.<sup>268</sup>*

<sup>267</sup> “Whitman Cult in France”. New York Times Saturday Review of Books, April 17, 1909, 1.

<sup>268</sup> “Whitman Cult in France”. New York Times Saturday Review of Books, April 17, 1909, 1.

Where do we start? First of all, translation activists even today, I among them, are engaged in a long-term effort to have, for example, more translations published in the US, more reviewed in the US press, and more translators credited for their work in these reviews, as well as on the books themselves...and here we have a review of a French translations of a work, albeit Whitman's, originally in English! The tone is condescending, yes, but there is nothing that new about that – in the course of the relationship between France and the US, some term it love-hate, some, as myself, prefer to think of it as a democratic sibling rivalry, we can find plenty of that, on both sides, of course. However, condescending or not, this was a review on the front page of a widely-read US book review magazine, if not the most widely-read. As some of us have always said, and to which we seem more and more witness of: even bad press is good press...Finally, what of Bazalgette taking *Leaves of Grass* to the workers? Was Montoliu aware of this, as he prepared another one of his own presentations to the workers at the meeting halls or universities in Barcelona? This seems a potentially fruitful field for further research: Bazalgette as activist, literary or otherwise, and Montoliu's knowledge of these types of activities on Bazalgette's part.

The two most notable French translators of Whitman's poetry in the second half of the twentieth century were Roger Asselineau and Jacques Darras, who both taught U.S. poetry in French universities. The former, who died in 2002, first published what had been roughly his dissertation, the internationally acclaimed – both by the public and the academic world - *L'Évolution de Walt Whitman* in 1954 (reprinted in an expanded edition by University of Iowa Press in 1999), which was one of the first works of Whitman scholarship to claim that the poet's homosexuality was the key to understanding his life and work. During his lifetime, Asselineau remained the foremost Whitman scholar in France.

As both an academic and a poet, like Asselineau, Jacques Darras has worked at a crosscurrent of international literary culture since the late 1970's and has edited anthologies of poetry written in many languages, as well as anthologies of French poetry, and has authored works of literary criticism such as *Nous sommes tous des romantiques allemands* (2002).<sup>269</sup> Besides having collected and translated essays on Whitman's poetry and transnational influence by poets and scholars from across Europe as well as the American continent, Darras contributed multiple texts, which call enthusiastically for a widespread reconsideration of Whitman in Europe, if not for the fate of poetry, then for the sake of the continent's future.

According to Athenot and Bronson-Bartlett, from a purely literary point of view, the least ambitious of the four texts, that is, of Laforgue's, Bazalgette's, Asselineau's and Darras', are Bazalgette's and Asselineau's. Apart from some of the criticism mentioned above, Bazalgette occasionally uses verbs in a way that can inflect the voice of the poem with surprisingly un-Whitmanian connotations.<sup>270</sup> Asselineau, for his part, commits less obvious *faux pas*, but generally steers an unremarkable middle ground, although, as Athenot and Bronson-Bartlett opine, he does capture some of the cultural subtext of 1860's US life that seem lost on the others.<sup>271</sup>

## Reception

*O mère! O fils!*  
*O troupeau continental!...*  
*O toi-même! O Dieu! O moyen divin!*  
*O forts de la Halle barbus!*  
*O poètes ! O dormeurs!*  
*Eau de Javelle!*

---

<sup>269</sup> Athenot, Eric, and Blake Bronson-Bartlett. "Whitman futur, ou l'avenir à venir: 'Poets to Come' in French Translation." Walt Whitman Archive, whitmanarchive.org.

<sup>270</sup> Athenot, Eric, and Blake Bronson-Bartlett. "Whitman futur, ou l'avenir à venir: 'Poets to Come' in French Translation." Walt Whitman Archive, whitmanarchive.org.

<sup>271</sup> Athenot, Eric, and Blake Bronson-Bartlett. "Whitman futur, ou l'avenir à venir: 'Poets to Come' in French Translation." Walt Whitman Archive, whitmanarchive.org.

...or so went the “translated” poem in the Saturday Press of 1860, supposedly a reprint from the Paris Journal Bibliographie Impériale (never proven to exist) which announced as well the imminent French translation of Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* by a certain “V.H.”.<sup>272</sup> Not exactly auspicious beginnings for the French connection to Whitman’s work and life.

We have an overview of the reception of Bazalgette’s biographic writings on Whitman and his translation/s of *Leaves of Grass*, in short, popular, but critically suspect, but what was the overall reception in France and Belgium, in particular, to Whitman and his work, both linguistically and culturally?

Asselineau, in his article, “Whitman in France and Belgium”, part of the book, *Walt Whitman and the World*, argues that the first serious translation of some of the poems of *Leaves of Grass* came in 1861, along with a short introduction under the title, “Walt Whitman, poète, philosophe, et “rowdy””, signed by Louis Etienne for La Revue Européenne.<sup>273</sup> In the introductory essay, Etienne attacked what he called its formlessness and incoherence, calling Whitman “lawless” and saying that his work was about “that republic which is not a state...but a still chaotic world” and embodied “American turbulence”.

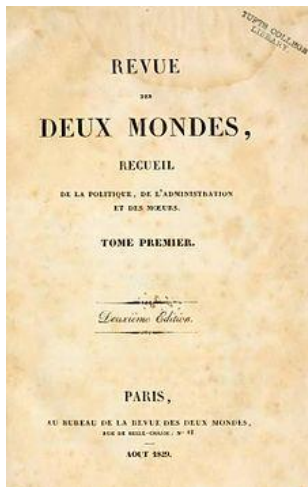
France’s political context at the time, however, was not exactly progressive...Napoleon III headed a regime where liberal ideas were banned and in which “democracy” was translated into disorder, if not anarchy. Despite Victor Hugo’s claims to grow beyond the old order, French poets were still working in a literary and ornate language, obeying strict poetic rules, or, to

---

<sup>272</sup> Asselineau, Roger, “Whitman in France and Belgium” from *Walt Whitman and the World*, Gay Wilson Allen and Ed Folsom, eds. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1995), 233.

<sup>273</sup> Asselineau, “Whitman in France and Belgium”, 234.

borrow a phrase from Voltaire a century earlier, “dancing in their chains.”<sup>274</sup> The only acceptable U.S. poet at the time, almost without exception, was Edgar Allen Poe, who Baudelaire had translated.



snipview.com

Following Napoleon III’s fall, things did not change straight away. On June 1, 1872, the Revue des Deux Mondes published a review of *Leaves of Grass* by one Mme Blanc, or Thérèse Bentzon, titled “Un poète américain, Walt Whitman: muscle and pluck forever.”<sup>275</sup> Bentzon criticized the work’s overall crudity and bad taste, putting forth that Whitman combined the excesses of Victor Hugo with the poisonous of Baudelaire’s *Fleurs du Mal*, to which a tribunal had objected and had insisted on the removal of six pages of the collection. The writer Henri Cochin, still traumatized by the Commune, according to Asselineau, wrote an article for Le Correspondent in which he warned of the dangers of anarchy sprouting from the “democracy run wild” that *Leaves of Grass* supposedly espoused.<sup>276</sup>

---

<sup>274</sup> Asselineau, “Whitman in France and Belgium”, 234.

<sup>275</sup> Asselineau, “Whitman in France and Belgium”, 234.

<sup>276</sup> Asselineau, “Whitman in France and Belgium”, 234.

However, around the same time in 1872, Henri Blémont wrote three articles over June and July in La Renaissance Littéraire et Artistique and, albeit, as Asselineau contends, basing his critique on what he had read, in great part, of the comments of the English on Whitman's work, including from the Rossetti edition, Blémont wrote "He is not Art, he is much more than that, he is life."<sup>277</sup> About a decade later, in 1884, Léo Quesnel, in Revue Bleue claimed Whitman "untranslatable" for his "free and rich language cannot be poured into the narrow and pure mold of the romance languages".<sup>278</sup> Rimbaud's *Illuminations* was published in 1886 and some believe he, too, was familiar with Whitman, at least via the English, if not through this French literary criticism.

With Laforgue's (see above) 1886 translation of some of Whitman's poems, and despite French poets in general being slow to come to free verse, the Symbolistes adopted Whitman and some of the other translations of his work, notably by Francis Viéél-Griffin and Teodor de Wyzewa. Another important factor was the critical essay on Whitman by Gabriel Sarrazin in La Nouvelle Revue in May of 1888 in which, Sarrazin, who was sympathetic to Whitman's pantheism, likened the poet to the mystics of "the Orient", emphasized his well-read culture, as well as seeing him as a writer reconciling "Jesus and Spinoza, the Brahmins and the Encyclopaedists, Lucretius and Fichte, Darwin and Plato."<sup>279</sup> As the influence of Symbolism waned, French translations of Whitman focused more on content than style, two were even presented in prose, that of Daniel Halévy, who concentrated almost solely on Whitman's political message, and Henry Davray, who also wrote an article with the telling title: "Whitman: ouvrier et poète". Did Montoliu see this expanded list of translations and thus feel even freer to also focus more on Whitman's political content, his "average man" quality, or then, his spiritual aspects?

---

<sup>277</sup> Asselineau, "Whitman in France and Belgium", 234.

<sup>278</sup> Asselineau, "Whitman in France and Belgium", 235.

<sup>279</sup> Asselineau, "Whitman in France and Belgium", 236.

According to Asselineau, even Gide ended up changing his *Les Nourritures terrestres* (1897), to the 1935 *Nouvelles nourritures*, in which his previous protagonist “Nathanaël” became “comrade” while Gide claimed himself as “a new Adam born for happiness”. Claudel, who had always been against Whitman’s work for its homosexual content, spent time as Consul in Boston and in New York, wrote his *Cinq grandes odes* in free verse, but “vigorously”, as Asselineau says, denied he had ever been influence by Whitman as to his ideas or techniques, which, he insisted, were “wholly instinctive and personal”.<sup>280</sup> (See Bloom, *Anxiety of Influence*). Whitman is included in the Pierre Segher series, Poètes d’aujourd’hui (1948) and in the 1960’s and 1970’s, he was especially appreciated by Jules Romains and Jean Guéhenno, the latter claiming that Whitman was “the greatest bard of Democracy that ever was”<sup>281</sup> Asselineau’s translated selection of *Leaves of Grass* (1954) was declared the “best to date” by Alain Bosquet and in 1989, Jacques Barras translated another selection of *Leaves of Grass*.<sup>282</sup> Finally, in the words of the Nobel-prize winning author, Mauritian Jean-Marie Le Clézio, Whitman “is still among us. His eye and his voice still invent our... words. He is even the most alive of us all.”<sup>283</sup>

### 2.2.5 Walt Whitman in Spain and Latin America

---

<sup>280</sup> Asselineau, “Whitman in France and Belgium”, 238.

<sup>281</sup> Asselineau, “Whitman in France and Belgium”, 240.

<sup>282</sup> Asselineau, “Whitman in France and Belgium”, 240.

<sup>283</sup> Asselineau, “Whitman in France and Belgium”, 240.



R. Darío / rickrozoff.wordpress.com

### *WALT WHITMAN*

En su país de hierro vive el gran viejo,  
bello como un patriarca, sereno y santo.  
Tiene en la arruga olímpica de su entrecejo  
algo que impera y vence con noble encanto.

Su alma del infinito parece espejo;  
son sus cansados hombros dignos del manto;  
y con arpa labrada de un roble añejo  
como un profeta nuevo canta su canto.

Sacerdote, que alienta soplo divino,  
anuncia en el futuro, tiempo mejor.  
Dice al águila: « ¡Vuela!; ¡Boga! », al marino,

y « ¡Trabajo!», al robusto trabajador.  
¡Así va ese poeta por su camino  
con su soberbio rostro de emperador!

- Rubén Darío (*Azul*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1890).

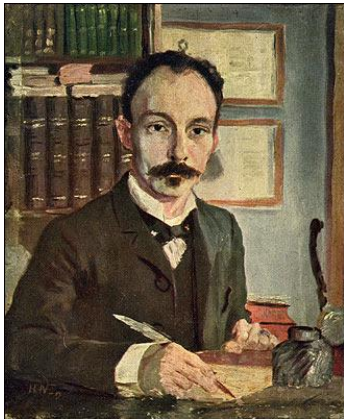
The appreciation of Walt Whitman by the Spanish-speaking world runs deep and wide. As an early recording of this admiration, the 1890 poem by the Nicaraguan Rubén Darío followed his friend's (1890), the Cuban José Martí, essay "El poeta Walt Whitman" published in El Partido



Liberal (April 19, 1887).<sup>284</sup> According to The Whitman Archive, Whitman's work was very little known in the Spanish-speaking world preceding Martí's essay, but we could say that his commentary on Whitman launched what has now grown into an at least 125-year history of Spanish-speaking writers composing poems in honor of Whitman and/or heavily influenced by him, writing critical essays on his work and /or - so prevalent as to be considered a rite of passage for the Hispanic writer - from Rubén Darío, as we see in his poem above, Enrique Gómez Carillo, Miguel de Unamuno, Álvaro Armando Vasseur, to José de Armas y Cárdenas, César Vallejo, Pablo Neruda, Jorge Luís Borges, to Gabriela Mistral and Octavio Paz, León Felipe, Francisco Alexander to Concha Zardoya and Luis Alberto Ambroggio – to translate him.

In a letter, Joan Maragall, Miguel de Unamuno recognized the long line of important artists of which Whitman was part:

*...Y, sin embargo, por querer separar la pasión de la idea, el fuego del combustible, convertimos en idea de pasión. Nuestra pasión se hace metafísica. Pero hay un mundo, el de la poesía, en que todo se hermana. Allí Leopardi da la mano a Walt Whitman.*<sup>285</sup>



Martí / abcsofschoolpsychology.blogspot.com

---

<sup>284</sup> “El poeta Walt Whitman”. José Martí conociendo poco a poco su obra. Accessed January 2017. <http://josemartiyperez.blogspot.com.es/2009/09/el-poeta-walt-whitman.html>.

<sup>285</sup> Miguel de Unamuno to Joan Maragall, November 18, 1906.

As Gay Wilson Allen and Ed Folsom share in their work, *Whitman in Spain and Latin America*, that the Nobel laureate Spanish poet Juan Ramon Jiménez, referring to Martí's essay, suggested that Darío owed much to him, and, Unamuno, a great deal. Jiménez felt that Spain and Spanish-speaking America were beholden to Martí for nothing short of the poetic discovery of the US. Through his travels in exile, Martí incorporated the US into Hispanic America and Spain better than any other Spanish-language writer.... Jiménez goes on to say “Whitman came to us, and to all Spaniards, through Martí”.<sup>286</sup>

Martí's essay has been credited with being the first Hispanic world critical essay on Whitman. Some might say, however, that his essay is more poem than prose with his emotional phrasing and overall lack of discussion on specifics or specific sections of *Leaves of Grass*. From the first paragraph, the reader is pulled into the mythology of Walt Whitman:

*Sólo los libros sagrados de la antigüedad ofrecen una doctrina comparable, por su profético lenguaje y robusta poesía, a la que en grandiosos y sacerdotales apotegmas emite, a manera de bocanadas de luz, este poeta viejo, cuyo libro pasmoso está prohibido.*<sup>287</sup>

Martí continues, calling *Leaves of Grass*, a “natural” book and his author, “a natural person” and, at the same time, “angelic.” Throughout his essay, he emphasizes the freedom within which Whitman lives and writes:

*así parece Whitman, «el que no dice estas poesías por su peso»; el que «está satisfecho, y ve, baila, canta y ríe»; el que «no tiene cátedra, ni púlpito, ni escuela», cuando se le compra a esos poetas y filósofos de un detalle o de un solo aspecto; poetas de aguamiel, de patrón, de libro; figurines filosóficos o literarios.*<sup>288</sup>

---

<sup>286</sup> “Whitman in Spain and Latin America” Allen, Gay Wilson and Folsom, Ed., eds., *Walt Whitman and the World*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1995). Muse.jhc.edu. Accessed March 2015. <https://muse.jhu.edu/chapter/340603>.

<sup>287</sup> Martí, José. “El poeta Walt Whitman”. El Partido Liberal, (April 19, 1887).

<sup>288</sup> Martí, José. “El poeta Walt Whitman”. El Partido Liberal, (1887).

And that, within his work, you see that “La libertad es la religión definitiva. Y la poesía de la libertad el culto nuevo”.<sup>289</sup>

Admitting, at the same time, that Whitman might not be the most refined of poets - and thus possibly exposing his own prejudice for the more traditional, or attempting to ease his more conservative reader into Whitman’s world? - Martí states that, among other things, Whitman invents his own grammar and logic and that “Hay que estudiarlo, porque si no es el poeta de mejor gusto, es el más intrépido, abarcador y desembarazado de su tiempo”.<sup>290</sup>

Martí turns to words that many more will employ when discussing Whitman and/or his poetry, for example, *healthy, athletic, daring, (mirroring) the natural world, mystical, universal, democratic*: “¿Quién es el ignorante que mantiene que la poesía no es indispensable a los pueblos?”.<sup>291</sup> Martí names Whitman as a voice of these peoples, his comrades, his friends: “Oíd lo que canta este pueblo trabajador y satisfecho; oíd a Walt Whitman.”

As for his style Martí says:

*Y todo eso lo dice en frase apocalíptica. ¿Rimas o acentos? ¡Oh no!, su ritmo está en las estrofas, ligadas, en medio de aquel caos aparente de frases superpuestas y convulsas, por una sabia composición que distribuye en grandes grupos musicales las ideas, como la natural forma poética de un pueblo que no fabrica piedra a piedra, sino a enormes bloqueadas.*<sup>292</sup>

He aligns Whitman’s language as a « continent » with no room for lethargy or cowardice. It represents the birth of a new era, the renaissance of a new person. As for the music of this new language:

---

<sup>289</sup> Martí, José. “El poeta Walt Whitman”. El Partido Liberal, (1887).

<sup>290</sup> Martí, José. “El poeta Walt Whitman”. El Partido Liberal, (1887).

<sup>291</sup> Martí, José. “El poeta Walt Whitman”. El Partido Liberal, (1887).

<sup>292</sup> Martí, José. “El poeta Walt Whitman”. El Partido Liberal, (1887).

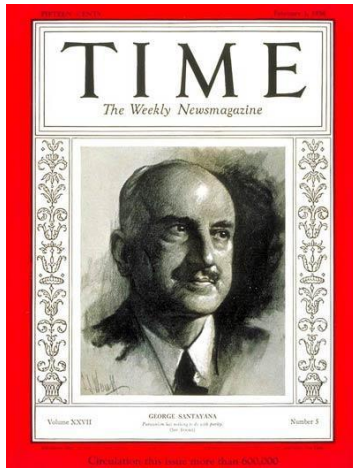
...Whitman habla en versículos, sin música aparente, aunque a poco de oírse se percibe que aquello suena como el casco de la tierra cuando vienen por él, descalzos y gloriosos, los ejércitos triunfantes. En ocasiones parece el lenguaje de Whitman el frente colgado de reses de una carnicería; otras parecen un canto de patriarcas, sentados en coro, con la suave tristeza del mundo a la hora en que el humo se pierde en las nubes; suena otras veces como un beso brusco, como un forzamiento, como el chasquido del cuero reseco que revienta al sol; pero jamás pierde la frase su movimiento rítmico de ola.<sup>293</sup>

The effect of Martí's essay cannot be underestimated. We have already seen that his friend, Darío, was influenced enough to compose and publish a poem on and for Whitman in his second edition of his own revolutionary poetry collection, *Azul*. In this wake, too, albeit in a more rather than less contradictory fashion, came George Santayana's essay, "'The Poetry of Barbarism'" from his book, *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* (1900, 1924).<sup>294</sup> The timing of Santayana's essay is curious from an *l'air du temps* perspective – when so many new commentators were writing in support of Whitman – Martí, Darío, Jorba, Dávalos Balkin, Bazalgette – and by a time in which even Thomas Wentworth Higginson had become apologetic for his first harsh words against *Leaves of Grass!* – here is Santayana writing, perhaps honestly, we can hope, but still, as if he were writing in the mid-eighteenth century and not at the turn of the new century. Montoliu, indefatigable bibliographic researcher he was, makes no mention of Santayana's work. Something to look further into, for certain. At the same time, the essay contains broad literary ideas that defy time and author, and the fact that Santayana chose Whitman as such a key subject could also indicate that, at least in Santayana's bilingual and bi-cultural world (Spain and the US), Whitman had "arrived" and was considered a part of the current canon, to be examined and contended with.

---

<sup>293</sup> Martí, José. "El poeta Walt Whitman". *El Partido Liberal*, (1887).

<sup>294</sup> Santayana, George. "The Poetry of Barbarism". *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*. (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), 166-216. Babel.HathiTrust. Accessed 1026 and 2017. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?num=166&u=1&seq=232&view=image&size=100&id=mdp.39015002757303&q1=Santayana%2C+George.+The+Poetry+of+Barbarism>.



Santayana / edgeflaw.blogspot.com

For Santayana, Whitman’s lack of reference to literary precedent is a sign of weakness, not strength. This being said, most scholars of Whitman now know, if there had been any doubt, that Whitman was well-read in the classics as well as his contemporaries’ writings and that this claim to be anything less so was more of an attempt to claim proximity with the working class, the people he said he had in mind as he wrote. It has to be also noted that Santayana can be considered more than just a classicist. He leans towards, in fact, a clear classic-ism. Here he is, speaking of “Homeric times”:

*The poetry of that simple and ignorant age was, accordingly, the sweetest and sanest that the world has known; the most faultless in taste, and the most even and lofty in inspiration.*<sup>295</sup>

and, on Homer himself, “Homer, the first of poets, was also the best and the most poetical”.

Since Homer’s time, Occidental literature has seen the power of idealization (in) steadily decline

---

<sup>295</sup> Santayana, “The Poetry of Barbarism”. *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*. (1924), 166.

and even Dante and Shakespeare are its victims. The poetry of this age, Santayana says, is the “poetry of barbarism.”<sup>296</sup>

This barbarism, of both poetry and imagination, is couched in a “general moral crisis and imaginative disintegration of which it gives a “verbal echo”<sup>297</sup> and of which Walt Whitman, and, for the purposes of his essay, and perhaps not to name this as a purely new, “New World” phenomenon, English poet Robert Browning, are representative. However, like the poetry of Whitman, as Santayana describes in part II of his essay this poetry of barbarism is

*not without its charm. It can play with sense and passion the more readily and freely in that it does not aspire to subordinate them to a clear thought or a tenable attitude of the will. It can impart the transitive emotions which it expresses...its irrational stimulation may tire us in the end, but it excites us in the beginning...*<sup>298</sup>

For Santayana, then, in Whitman, the barbarism is much more pronounced (than in Browning); it is, indeed, avowed, and the "barbaric yawp" is sent "over the roofs of the world " in full consciousness of its inarticulate character; He does not “domesticate” his passions, which, he feels, are their own justification for being. In Whitman, one finds

*the swarms of men and objects rendered as they might strike the retina in a sort of waking dream...Walt Whitman has gone back to the innocent style of Adam, when the animals filed before him one by one and he called each of them by its name...*<sup>299</sup>

Both liberalism and transcendentalism, two predominant schools of thought in mid-19<sup>th</sup> c United States, harbored within them the illusion of a no-past. Whitman lived in this context as well as living it in a new country, where its “newness” made it easier to ignore the fatal antiquity of human nature. Whitman’s chief interest, if we are to trust him on this point, was in his own

---

<sup>296</sup> Santayana, “The Poetry of Barbarism”. *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*. (1924), 176.

<sup>297</sup> Santayana, “The Poetry of Barbarism”. *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*. (1924), 169.

<sup>298</sup> Santayana, “The Poetry of Barbarism”. *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*. (1924), 174.

<sup>299</sup> Santayana, “The Poetry of Barbarism”. *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*. (1924), 178.

sensations. His mind was flooded with images, keenly felt and afterward to be vividly rendered with bold strokes of realism and imagination. Whitman is all surface and the “underlying structure is without interest and almost without existence”.<sup>300</sup> For Santayana, Whitman’s world has no inside, but is a series of visions – “vivid, impressive, but monotonous and hard to distinguish in memory, like the waves of the sea”.<sup>301</sup> Interesting, too, that Santayana, like Marti, uses this image of the sea to describe the rhythms found within Whitman’s work.

Whitman is for Santayana, as previously stated, is not without his charms, indeed:

*This abundance of detail without organization, this wealth of perception without intelligence and of imagination without taste, makes the singularity of Whitman's genius. Full of sympathy and receptivity, with a wonderful gift of graphic characterization and an occasional rare grandeur of diction, he fills us with a sense of the individuality and the universality of what he describes -- it is a drop in itself yet a drop in the ocean. The absence of any principle of selection or of a sustained style enables him to render aspects of things and of emotion which would have eluded a trained writer. He is, therefore, interesting even where he is grotesque or perverse.*<sup>302</sup>

Santayana does feel, however, in the end, that Whitman’s crude democracy was misguided and that already by mid-century, the US had entered into another phase of development and wanted to build on its previous success, not to remain victim of its emotional whims. He states that Whitman is not the spokesman of the tendencies of his country, let alone the working class of his country and that his staunchest fans were in the educated classes he supposedly disdained. He was also regarded as representative chiefly by foreigners, who look for some grotesque expression of the genius of so young and prodigious a people. In short, Whitman failed to accomplish his stated objective, that is, to be a poet of the people.

In the end, Whitman along with Browning, might

---

<sup>300</sup> Santayana, “The Poetry of Barbarism”. *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*. (1924), 178.

<sup>301</sup> Santayana, “The Poetry of Barbarism”. *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*. (1924), 180.

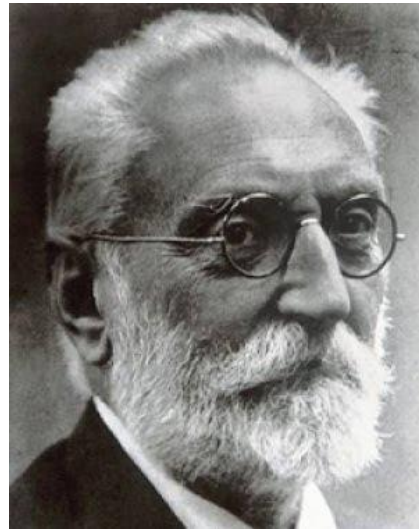
<sup>302</sup> Santayana, “The Poetry of Barbarism”. *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*. (1924), 180.

*...well figure then as representatives of our time. For the merit of being representative cannot be denied them. The mind of our age, like theirs, is choked with materials, emotional, and inconclusive.*<sup>303</sup>

The Madrid-born Santayana and his family immigrated to the US when Santayana was a child and this essay, along with the vast majority of his work, was written in English. One might suppose that for this reason, at least not right away - not until Vasseur's preface to his translation do we find a formal "response" to Santayana's essay - his essay had a minor effect on Whitman's reception among Spanish-speaking and writing, readers.



Dávalos Balkin / datuopinion.com



de Unamuno / legitimistadigital.com

A year following Santayana's essay, the Mexican poet, jurist and diplomat, Balbino Dávalos Balkin translated Whitman's "A Song" for the occasion of the second American International Congress held in Mexico City in 1901<sup>304</sup> and, in 1906, some scholars say that the Spanish poet and philosopher, Miguel de Unamuno translated some of Whitman's poems as well, although,

---

<sup>303</sup> Santayana, "The Poetry of Barbarism". *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*. (1924), 216.

<sup>304</sup> Englekirk, John E. "Notes on Whitman in Spanish America." Hispanic Review: the quarterly journal devoted to research in the Hispanic Languages and Literatures. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, Vol. VI, No. 2, April 1938):133-38.



this researcher could find no prove of that fact. As far as my research shows, Unamuno mentioned Whitman in essays of this era, and translated part of “Captain, O, Captain” in the context of one of these essays.<sup>305</sup>

It is with Uruguyan Álvaro Armando Vasseur’s 1912 substantial selection and translation of Walt Whitman’s poetry, titled simply *Poemas*,<sup>306</sup> that Whitman became available and important to generations of Latin American poets. According to Matt Cohen and Rachel Price’s essay written for The Whitman Archive, scholars have also identified Vasseur’s translation as instrumental in accelerating Latin American poetry’s shedding of its “*modernista*” tendencies in favor of franker, often more explicitly socially and politically engaged verse.<sup>307</sup>

Álvaro Armando Vasseur’s *Poemas* (1912)

As stated in the “Walt Whitman in Spain and Latin American” section of this dissertation, it is with Uruguyan Álvaro Armando Vasseur’s 1912 substantial selection and translation of Walt Whitman’s poetry, titled simply *Poemas*,<sup>308</sup> that Whitman became available and important to generations of Latin American poets. According to Matt Cohen and Rachel Price and their article, “Introduction to Álvaro Armando Vasseur, Preface to the Sixth Edition of Walt Whitman: Poemas”, written for The Walt Whitman Archive, scholars have also identified Vasseur’s translation as instrumental in accelerating Latin American poetry’s shedding of its

---

<sup>305</sup> See, for example, Blanco, Manuel Garcia. Walt Whitman y Unamuno”. Atlántico Revista de Cultura Contemporánea (Madrid, Casa America, No. 2, June 1956): 5-47 and, in this same issue, Englekirk, John E. “Whitman en Castellano”, 73-87 and Englekirk, John E. "Notes on Whitman in Spanish America". Hispanic Review: the quarterly journal devoted to research in the Hispanic Languages and Literatures. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, Vol. VI, No. 2, April 1938):133-38.

<sup>306</sup> Cohen, Matt and Rachel Price. "Introduction to Álvaro Armando Vasseur, Preface to the Sixth Edition of Walt Whitman: Poemas." The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed March 2015.  
<http://whitmanarchive.org/published/foreign/spanish/vasseur/preface-intro>.

<sup>307</sup> Cohen, Matt and Rachel Price. "Introduction to Álvaro Armando Vasseur, Preface to the Sixth Edition of Walt Whitman: Poemas." The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>308</sup> Whitman, Walt. *Poemas*. Translated by Álvaro Armando Vasseur. (Valencia: F. Sempere, 1912).

“*modernista*” tendencies in favor of franker, often more explicitly socially and politically engaged verse.<sup>309</sup>

Vasseur was born in 1878 to French immigrants in Montevideo, Uruguay and when he was twenty years old, he moved to Buenos Aires, Argentina. There, as a poet himself, he mingled with writers Rubén Darío and Leopoldo Lugones, the former perhaps an influence on him in his undertaking of the Whitman translation once he was diplomat posted in Spain. Vasseur, whose poetry collections, *Cantos Augerales* (1904) and *Cantos del Nuevo Mundo* (1907) included a reflection of Whitman’s influence, political as well as artistic, came to Spain as a diplomat. As for his translation and given Vasseur’s beliefs and entourages in Buenos Aires and Montevideo, it is not surprising that the same press responsible for the diffusion of European revolutionary thinkers such as Karl Marx, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Georg Büchner and Friedrich Nietzsche would publish Vasseur’s translation of Whitman: the editorial house Sempere, in Valencia.<sup>310</sup>

In his introduction to his translation, Vasseur is concerned to situate Whitman and his translation of him in the history of American cosmopolitan literary channels and, to do so, he necessarily offers a detailed account of both the context for his translation and the methods he used to compose it. Vasseur’s repositioning of Whitman here takes place largely through a critique of George Santayana’s account of Whitman’s poetry in “The Poetry of Barbarism” (1900). According to Cohen and Price, Vasseur uses Santayana to read Whitman as simultaneously a national and an international figure, critiquing Santayana’s intellectual homelessness as he defines Whitman’s portability against it.

---

<sup>309</sup> Cohen, Matt and Price, Rachel. “Introduction to Álvaro Armando Vasseur, Preface to the Sixth Edition of Walt Whitman: Poemas”, The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed November 2014.  
<http://whitmanarchive.org/published/foreign/spanish/vasseur/preface-intro>.

<sup>310</sup> Cohen and Price, “Introduction to Álvaro Armando Vasseur, Preface to the Sixth Edition of Walt Whitman: Poemas”, The Walt Whitman Archive.

For Cohen and Price, Vasseur, through his arguing for Whitman's "Americanness" he implies

*...both a kind of terroir in Whitman's writing and that Whitman sought a hemispheric affinity—Vasseur suggests how complex the uses of Whitman were in Latin America. Vasseur's text is rich with the complexity of the translation enterprise and exemplifies the flexibility Whitman offered his translators.*<sup>311</sup>

For Vasseur, as others have argued before and since, Whitman was inspired by Emerson's essays – including *The Poet* (1844)? - to imagine a new form of poetry, perhaps, too, poet. In Vasseur's opinion, Whitman was looking for what many, including very strongly, Montoliu, considered or consider that he succeeded in doing: that is, "descending" to the most minimal daily details, to "remontarse a todas las plenitudes espirituales" – without falling into either prose or traditional poetic form.<sup>312</sup> Vasseur argues that Baudelaire says something similar in his prologue to his *Prose Poems* and that each author's temperament and language of origin produce a different result, both, being, however, almost without precedent, unless one looks to Bible verses or Vedic hymns.<sup>313</sup>

Whitman's task, according to Vasseur, was less how to construe becoming the "cantor de la democracia" and more how, first of all, to break medieval metrical molds, like Montoliu would discuss Whitman shedding the cloak of feudalism, and, second of all, how to revolutionize the rhetoric of the *antiguo régimen* to give the "intelecto Americano la libertad de creación y de expresión, como otros le habían dado ya la libertad política y civil."<sup>314</sup> In order to do this, Whitman needed to rid himself of European influence, and, at the same time, go back, to search

---

<sup>311</sup> Cohen and Price, "Introduction to Álvaro Armando Vasseur, Preface to the Sixth Edition of Walt Whitman: *Poemas*", The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>312</sup> Vasseur, Álvaro Armando Vasseur. *Poemas [1912]*. Introduction, vii. The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed April 2016 and April 2017. <http://whitmanarchive.org/published/foreign/spanish/vasseur/text.html>.

<sup>313</sup> Vasseur., *Poemas [1912]*. Introduction, vii. The Walt Whitman Archive. It is also worth noting Vasseur's own footnote here: "Algunos poemas de W. Whitman parecen escritos por la misma mano que grabara *El Bhagavat Glizta*. En otros se manifiesta como una reencarnación de *Kalidassa*."

<sup>314</sup> Vasseur., *Poemas [1912]*. Introduction, viii. The Walt Whitman Archive.

for ancient roots and, go towards the future, throw himself into the unknown.<sup>315</sup> For Vasseur, for example, Whitman, with his “extraordinario instinto poética”, has echoes of the Evangelists that he went looking for,<sup>316</sup> or, in my argument, in which he was imbued from childhood through the Quaker thought and practice. And Whitman’s mission, so to speak, was not to be just another poet, but:

*el evangelista del Continente en formación, creador de valores nuevos, héroe, profeta y compañero de los hombres. Guía de los guías, consolador de los afligidos, pánico de los despotas, maravilla de los niños, encanto de los jóvenes, amigo de las esposas, consejero de los padres, glorificador de la vida y de la muerte.*<sup>317</sup>

Living is not to save oneself, as Schopenhauer proposed, nor is it to not perish, as Darwin postulated.<sup>318</sup> No, to live, is to not develop oneself at the expense of others, but – and here, once more, Nietzsche, that, perhaps ironically, we are more egalitarian the more imperial each one of us is within her or himself.<sup>319</sup> Whitman is comparable for Vasseur to Wagner’s (again)<sup>320</sup> Sigfrido;<sup>321</sup> he was gifted with a wisdom as a 30-some writer that Faust had to wait for old age for; knew, for example, to prioritize the smile of a child to the treasures hidden in a bank’s safe. Whitman was able to gather the greatest teachings of the ages and integrate them into his own being, god-like.

Vasseur, unlike Montoliu, and many others, takes the time to talk of the life Whitman led with *Leaves of Grass*. That is, forty years:

---

<sup>315</sup> Vasseur, *Poemas [1912]*. Introduction, viii. The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>316</sup> Vasseur, *Poemas [1912]*. Introduction, viii. The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>317</sup> Vasseur, *Poemas [1912]*. Introduction, viii. The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>318</sup> Vasseur, *Poemas [1912]*. Introduction, viii. The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>319</sup> Vasseur, *Poemas [1912]*. Introduction, ix. The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>320</sup> See section “Cebrià Montoliu: The Essay: *L’Home i sa tasca*” of this dissertation for more on critics aligning Whitman with Wagner.

<sup>321</sup> Vasseur, *Poemas [1912]*. Introduction, ix. The Walt Whitman Archive.

*Cuarenta años transcurrieron, densos, eléctricos, antes que Whitman moldeara definitivamente las intuiciones torrenciales y con frecuencia contradictorias de su genio. Cuarenta años de luchas con el verbo y el ritmo, de variantes y de refundiciones incesantes.*

*Diez ediciones<sup>322</sup> de las Hojas de hierba vieron la luz en vida de Whitman...<sup>323</sup>*

Here Vasseur, continues and keys in on one of the major contradictions of Whitman and his work:

*...Á cada nueva edición el libro crecía, se transformaba, tornábase de más en más monumental...Pero siempre era « el mismo libro ».<sup>324</sup>*

And Vasseur continues with his *éloges*, stating that some of what Whitman wrote is among the best verses of all times; moreover, his rhythm is on par with Wagner's symphonies and "sólo Nietzsche en el poema de "Los siete sellos" alcanza la altura y el vuelo líricos del yanqui."<sup>325</sup>

Here, Vasseur delineates a timeline of Whitman alongside that of Nietzsche, and yes, although it is hard to believe neither one read the other – both were such known cultural forces, references, even as unstable men, if not geniuses, and we know Whitman had a great interest in Germanic culture and/or being accepted by the Germanic people; on the other hand, we know, as discussed in the "Walt Whitman in Germany and German-speaking countries" section of this same dissertation that thanks to the reputable translator Freiligrath's translation of some of Whitman's poems (1868), published, along with his introduction in a very widely read, if not the most read daily, the Allgemeinen Zeitung, not to mention the Whitman cult around Germany, Nietzsche could have very well read this and thus been familiar with Whitman and his work. Apparently,

---

<sup>322</sup> Vasseur is mistaken here. Although there is some discrepancy, depending on the count, six or seven editions is the commonly accepted "argument", with The Walt Whitman Archive proceeding with the idea of six, "plus a seventh text, the so-called deathbed edition". <http://whitmanarchive.org/about/editorial.html>.

<sup>323</sup> Vasseur., *Poemas [1912]*. Introduction, viii. The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>324</sup> Vasseur., *Poemas [1912]*. Introduction, viii. The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>325</sup> Vasseur., *Poemas [1912]*. Introduction, x. The Walt Whitman Archive.

however, neither one seems to mention the other anywhere in their papers or, as the case, may be, recorded conversations.

In any case, Vasseur believes that “El cosmos yanqui era, en su vida y en su naturaleza, lo que el poeta germano había soñado ser: la fuerza y la dulzura, la belleza y el desinterés.”<sup>326</sup> However, poetically speaking, Vasseur places them on pedestals that may be different, but are of the same force, and, furthermore, has a harsh word for those that did not quite achieve the same heights:

*Ambos son, a mi juicio, los líricos máximos del siglo pasado. El alemán, con las limitaciones que le imponía sus criticismo filosófico y las complejidades de su gran cultura clásica. El yanqui con los deslumbramientos de su trascendentalismo religioso y las ingenuidades de su augusta autodidaccia. Aquél, concentrado y explosivo, a semejanza de los inflamables de los arsenales prusianos; éste, desbordante y por momentos monótono, como las cataratas de su patria. Á su lado, Hugo, Leconte de Lisle, Swinburne, Carducci, Junqueiro, Rapisardi, parecen poetas regionales. Poetas, en el sentido más convencional y europeo de la palabra.*<sup>327</sup>

Vasseur concludes reminding the reader of how universal (read: “European”) Whitman’s work was at that point, with translations into German, Italian, French and Spanish. Disappointly, he does not include Catalan in his list. Ignorance, oversight, political statement? And here is the interesting list of several names of translators he chooses to include:

*...los futuristas» en Italia; Laforgue, Viélé-Griffin y los «poetas sociales» en Francia; Miers, Rossetti, Carpenter, en Inglaterra; Unamuno, y quizá Alomar, en España; Darío y Lugones en América, le deben diversas y profundas sugerencias.*<sup>328</sup>

Again, Montoliu invisible...and are we to understand that Vasseur considers Léon Bazalgette one of those “«poetas sociales» en Francia”?

### 3.1 Cebrià Montoliu: His World: Life, Times & Mind

---

<sup>326</sup> Vasseur., *Poemas [1912]*. Introduction, xi. The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>327</sup> Vasseur., *Poemas [1912]*. Introduction, xi. The Walt Whitman Archive.

<sup>328</sup> Vasseur., *Poemas [1912]*. Introduction, xi. The Walt Whitman Archive.



Cebrià Montoliu / From *Cebrià Montoliu*, a cura de Francesc Roca. Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1993, front cover

*Escolteu Walt Whitman, l'inspirat cantor de la nova democràcia saxona, devinguda l'estendard de l'esprit social modern. Walt Whitman i els Estats Units són una mateixa cosa (l'un explica l'altre, com diria el mateix poeta), i si la nació ianki es l'ultima expression d'aquest modernisme social, Walt Whitman es la veritable personificació...de l'esprit ianki.*<sup>329</sup>

“Listen to Walt Whitman, inspired bard of the new Saxon democracy, who transformed how we define the modern social spirit...Walt Whitman and the United States are the same thing (one explains the other, as the poet himself says), and if the Yankee nation is the latest expression of this social *modernism*, Walt Whitman is the true embodiment...of the Yankee spirit.”

*Walt Whitman...es un home de poble, un treballador que s'ha il·lustrat i s'ha fet poeta, en Whitman fou tota sa vida un obrer que canta, home tant com poeta, sense consentir mai en sacrificar sa humanitat.*<sup>330</sup>

“Walt Whitman...is a man of the people...was all his life a worker who sings as both man and as poet, without ever consenting to the sacrifice of his humanity.”

-Cebrià Montoliu, in his introduction to *Fulles d'Herba*

-----

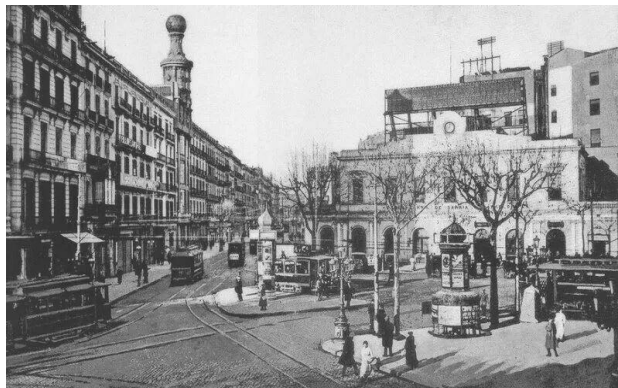
Yes, modern social spirit, social modernism and life as a worker. Cebrià Montoliu had more in common with one of his role models, Walt Whitman, than he would have perhaps dared to admit. Here, I will introduce Cebrià Montoliu through an overview of his family background, the times in which he lived - the artistic-social and political context in which he lived and worked,

---

<sup>329</sup> Whitman, Walt. *Fulles d'Herba*, Introduction. Translated by Cebrià Montoliu. (Barcelona : Tip., L'Avenç, 1909), 6.

<sup>330</sup> Whitman, Walt. *Fulles d'Herba*. Introduction. Translated by Cebrià Montoliu. (Barcelona : Tip., L'Avenç, 1909), 10-11.

and the professional endeavors, including his translating activities, he chose to pursue. I believe as I go along, it will become more clear as to why Montoliu could admire Whitman, his vision especially, and how his own adult era in Catalunya, from approximately 1900-1920, echoed so much of what Whitman was seeing around him, or encouraging in his world, particularly during the years of the first editions of *Leaves of Grass* (1855).



Plaça de Catalunya 1910 / pinterest.com

Barcelona's population in 1910 was 1,141,735. By the time Montoliu would leave for the US in 1920, the population was 1,349,230. By 1930, it was nearing 2,000,000.<sup>331</sup>

### Art: Noucentisme

A key factor in this contextualization of Montoliu's life and times is the transition in art from modernism to *noucentisme*.

Although the appellation 'noucentisme' derives from "noucents", the 1900, it also mirrors the word "new" in it, and participants in the movement were concerned with the creation of a new society, and a new citizen to go along with it; it did refer constantly back to Classical Greece, for its architectural lines, and, most importantly, overall idea of the *polis* as the birthplace of

---

<sup>331</sup> Risques, Manuel, dir., Duarte, Angel, de Riquer, Borja and Rosich, Josep M. Roig. *Història de la Catalunya Contemporània*. (Barcelona : Biblioteca Pòrtic Universitària 1999).



western democratic practice. The movement also had the implicit, if not explicit, support and participation of the nationalistic Catalan bourgeoisie of the time, as we will see.

For Aleix Catasús and Bernat Puigdollers the first noucentista art work was Picasso's "Les demoiselles d'Avignon".<sup>332</sup> However, noucentisme was not an esthetic limited to the plastic arts, but – "exactly as with modernism", Catasús and Puigdollers continue, translated into art "an ensemble of fine/plastic arts responses related, but different...".<sup>333</sup> The big capital of Catalunya, Barcelona, led the movement, but the movement itself was not anti-rural, as often put forth. It is also often said that noucentisme was the art arm of Prat's Lliga Regionalista,<sup>334</sup> but it was also, in the authors' opinion, as a transversal force, the art of "l'Acció Catalana<sup>335</sup> i dels republicans catalanistes".<sup>336</sup>

In architecture and in the context of noucentisme, Gaudi's modernism was considered, old hat at best, baroque, at worst. And, although one of the representative architects of noucentisme, Josep Puig i Cadafach, and his Palau de la Musica, which opened in 1908, seems quite baroque, Cadafach would go on to design more clean-lined buildings that resemble more the lines of, for example, a Llimona's sculpture, a Torres-Garcia illustration, or a Casas portrait.

---

<sup>332</sup> Catasús, Aleix and Puigdollers, Bernat. *El Noucentisme a Barcelona*. (Barcelona : Ambient, 2016), 7.

<sup>333</sup> Catasús and Puigdollers, *El Noucentisme a Barcelona*, 8.

<sup>334</sup> The Lliga Regionalista is described by en.wikipedia.org as a right wing party, with a catalanist and monarchic ideology. The enciclopèdia.cat website describes it as being formed in 1901 through a fusion of the Unió Regionalista and the National Catalan Center with its main aim being Catalan statehood. Both sites state that its main press organ was La Veu de Catalunya. Accessed May 2017.

<sup>335</sup> Acció Catalana was a political party founded in 1922 whose members were from different youth movements, in general displeased with the Lliga Regionalista. Accessed May 2017. [https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acció\\_Catalana](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acció_Catalana)

<sup>336</sup> Catasús and Puigdollers, *El Noucentisme a Barcelona*, 8.



Palau de la Música / lasfotoslasmasalucinaantes.blogspot.com



Palau de la Música / patrimoni.gen.cat



Llimona sculpture, Pl. Catalunya / barcelonanavigator.com



en.wikipedia.org

The drawing by Ramon Casas which became the logo for *Els quatre gats*, The Four Cats, opened in 1897 in a building on Montsió, 3 designed by Puig i Cadafach which opened in 1897 and was an important cultural meeting place of the era. It is still open and serving today.



Torres-Garcia / pinterest.com



In order to better understand Montoliu's times in Barcelona and the rapid changes that were happening at the time, it is worth introducing a couple of actors who will help to understand Montoliu's attitudes of renewal: the artist and critic Josep Maria de Sucre and the North American engineer and entrepreneur Frederick Stark Pearson.

Josep Maria de Sucre i de Grau [1886-1969]



anarquismo.jimdo.com

Josep Maria de Sucre i de Grau was a poet and painter, art critic, and sympathetic to anarchists and avant-gardists, although he himself was from a combination of a bourgeois (mother) and aristocratic (father) background.<sup>337</sup> His father was literarily inclined and would bring his son along to the The Café Tost and Els Quatre Gats where, among others, Pau Casals, Eugeni d'Ors and Pablo Picasso would congregate.

---

<sup>337</sup> Viquipèdia.org. Accessed March 2017. [https://ca.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josep\\_Maria\\_de\\_Sucre\\_i\\_de\\_Grau](https://ca.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josep_Maria_de_Sucre_i_de_Grau).

From 1903 to 1923, Sucre worked in the criminal justice system while writing and publishing his poetry, at first in the magazine Occitània, then followed by two books *Un poble d'Acció*<sup>338</sup> and *Apol noi*<sup>339</sup> of which Joan Maragall would write:

*Tota la seva poesia llença una flaire de joventut que enamora tant més quant més contacte amb no sé què de revollit que es desprèn de tota la nostra jove escola literària "l'Apol noi" és un veritable "Apol-noi", aquest títol ha sigut una altra inspiració.*<sup>340</sup>

In June 1912, Sucre was named president of l'Ateneu Enciclopèdic Popular, where Montoliu would give lectures in his proposal of the ciutat jardí. He was also closely involved in the magazine Un Enemic del Poble. He continued writing on his own time as well, and in 1921, had published his biography of Joan Maragall.<sup>341</sup>

Sucre blossomed as an art critic and painter in the years that followed, working for magazines as well as hosting art exhibitions at the Dalmau gallery, getting to know the artists of the day – Isidre Nonell, Joan Miró, Salvador Dalí, Joaquim Torres-Garcia, García Lorca, among others.

In 1962, de Sucre won the Juan Gris Prize for his oeuvre of painting. In 1963, he published his memoirs with Barna DL and Joan Francesc de Lasa would produce a short-feature on his life and work.<sup>342</sup> Curiously enough, at least from my careful perusal, there is no mention of Montoliu in these memoirs. That being said, de Sucre's memoirs are more specifically focused than we might

---

<sup>338</sup> de Sucre, Josep M. *Un poble d'Acció* (Barcelona: Imp. Josep Ortega, 1906?).

[http://catalag.bnc.cat/search~S13\\*cat/?searchtype=X&searcharg=Sucre%2C+Josep+Maria+de&searchscope=13&sortdropdown=-&SORT=AZ&extended=0&SUBMIT=Cerca&searchlimits=&searchorigarg=XCerca](http://catalag.bnc.cat/search~S13*cat/?searchtype=X&searcharg=Sucre%2C+Josep+Maria+de&searchscope=13&sortdropdown=-&SORT=AZ&extended=0&SUBMIT=Cerca&searchlimits=&searchorigarg=XCerca).

<sup>339</sup> de Sucre, Josep M. *Apol noi* (Barcelona: Llibreria Espanyola, 1907).

[http://catalag.bnc.cat/search~S13\\*cat/?searchtype=X&searcharg=Sucre%2C+Josep+Maria+de&searchscope=13&sortdropdown=-&SORT=AZ&extended=0&SUBMIT=Cerca&searchlimits=&searchorigarg=XCerca](http://catalag.bnc.cat/search~S13*cat/?searchtype=X&searcharg=Sucre%2C+Josep+Maria+de&searchscope=13&sortdropdown=-&SORT=AZ&extended=0&SUBMIT=Cerca&searchlimits=&searchorigarg=XCerca).

<sup>340</sup> Viquipèdia.org. Accessed March 2017. [https://ca.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josep\\_Maria\\_de\\_Sucre\\_i\\_de\\_Grau](https://ca.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josep_Maria_de_Sucre_i_de_Grau).

<sup>341</sup> de Sucre, Josep M. *Joan Maragall* (Barcelona: Llibreria Nacional Catalana, 1921).

[http://catalag.bnc.cat/search~S13\\*cat/?searchtype=X&searcharg=Sucre%2C+Josep+Maria+de&searchscope=13&sortdropdown=-&SORT=AZ&extended=0&SUBMIT=Cerca&searchlimits=&searchorigarg=XCerca](http://catalag.bnc.cat/search~S13*cat/?searchtype=X&searcharg=Sucre%2C+Josep+Maria+de&searchscope=13&sortdropdown=-&SORT=AZ&extended=0&SUBMIT=Cerca&searchlimits=&searchorigarg=XCerca).

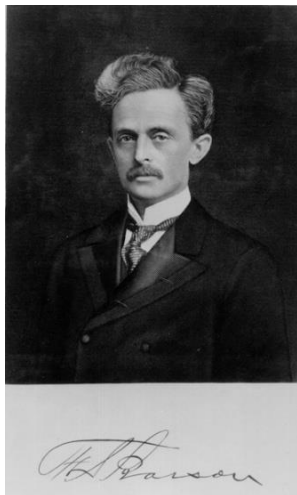
<sup>342</sup> Catalogue of the Biblioteca Nacional de Catalunya. Catalogue and actual work accessed March 2016 and 2017.

[http://catalag.bnc.cat/search~S13\\*cat/?searchtype=X&searcharg=Sucre%2C+Josep+Maria+de&searchscope=13&sortdropdown=-&SORT=AZ&extended=0&SUBMIT=Cerca&searchlimits=&searchorigarg=XCerca](http://catalag.bnc.cat/search~S13*cat/?searchtype=X&searcharg=Sucre%2C+Josep+Maria+de&searchscope=13&sortdropdown=-&SORT=AZ&extended=0&SUBMIT=Cerca&searchlimits=&searchorigarg=XCerca) and Viquipèdia.org. Accessed March 2017. [https://ca.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josep\\_Maria\\_de\\_Sucre\\_i\\_de\\_Grau](https://ca.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josep_Maria_de_Sucre_i_de_Grau).

first assume on his interaction with the art world, particularly the visual arts. In 1969, Sucre died where he had been born and spent most of his life, at Sant Salvador 32, Vila de Gràcia.

The letters we have between de Sucre and Montoliu, from the collection Ramon Borràs, housed at the Biblioteca Nacional de Barcelona, date from 1917-1920, most being sent back and forth within the expanding confines of Barcelona, with one written by Montoliu on board the *Savoie*, on its way to the US (although later sent from Fairhope, Alabama), and another from Cambridge and another one, written in and sent directly from, Fairhope.<sup>343</sup> In his letters to de Sucre, Montoliu talks mainly of his activities in Boston and his hope in having de Sucre arrange a meeting between him and Fiske Warren, an economist closely involved in the Fairhope project. We will look at the content of these letters in more detail in the discussion on Montoliu's years in the US.

Frederick Stark Pearson [1861-1915] Technology and Electricity



snipview.com

---

<sup>343</sup> Catalogue of the Biblioteca Nacional de Catalunya. Catalogue and actual work accessed March 2016 and 2017. [http://catalag.bnc.cat/search~S13\\*cat/?searchtype=X&searcharg=Sucre%2C+Josep+Maria+de&searchscope=13&sortdropdown=-&SORT=AZ&extended=0&SUBMIT=Cerca&searchlimits=&searchorigarg=XCerca](http://catalag.bnc.cat/search~S13*cat/?searchtype=X&searcharg=Sucre%2C+Josep+Maria+de&searchscope=13&sortdropdown=-&SORT=AZ&extended=0&SUBMIT=Cerca&searchlimits=&searchorigarg=XCerca) .

Dr. Frederick Stark Pearson was the son of Ambrose and Hannah (Edgerly) Pearson. His father's death in 1876 when Pearson was twenty threw the family's finances into disarray and by the next year he was obligated to accept employment as stationmaster on the Boston and Lowell at Medford. In 1879, thanks to a loan from an uncle, Pearson was able to enroll in Tufts College, where he excelled in mathematics and chemistry, graduating in 1883 with an A.M.B. and then receiving an A.M.M. degree one year later. From college, Pearson went on to develop the electric transportation system in Boston with electric powered streetcars and in 1894, he was appointed the head engineer for Metropolitan Street Railways in New York City.<sup>344</sup> Pearson built a reputation as an innovative electrical engineer in the Northeast and was soon contracted by governments and businesses as a consulting engineer for power generating stations throughout North America.

From North America, Pearson made a move to London, and involvement in the financial markets there, Pearson earned generous amounts of money and found funders for projects in Mexico and Brazil. He was known for two qualities in particular, that of never believing that any cause was a lost cause and how to make the most of the cards dealt him.<sup>345</sup> These qualities would serve him well when, between 1911 and 1913, he negotiated a deal with the Spanish government for a hydro project on the Ebro River and formed the Barcelona Traction, Light and Power Company to carry out the construction. The power plant was formed out of rock in la Conca de Tremp.<sup>346</sup> Pearson would make seven visits to the work site and, in the end, he was so appreciated by the workers of the plant, that they honored him with a celebration "com si fos el mateix Mister

---

<sup>344</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick\\_Stark\\_Pearson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Stark_Pearson), Accessed March 1, 2017.

<sup>345</sup> Moret, Xavier. *L'home que va portar la llum a Catalunya*. (Barcelona: Columna Edicions, S.A.,2004), 86.

<sup>346</sup> Moret, Xavier. *L'home que va portar la llum a Catalunya*, 107.

Marshall”.<sup>347</sup> The plant was completed in 1915.<sup>348</sup> The neighborhood Floresta Pearson is still here today, of course, and there is also a street in Barcelona named after the man who brought electricity to the region.

While travelling to England on the ocean liner *RMA Lusitania* for business and to visit his daughter Natalie who was then living there, he and his wife were two of the victims when the ocean liner was torpedoed off the southern coast of Ireland on May 7, 1915.<sup>349</sup>

Besides bringing the revolution of electricity to burgeoning - or should I say, bursting - Barcelona, Pearson was man to contend with. There were local newspapers articles on him and his ambitious projects, such as the short one from the “Información telegráfica y telefónica particular de La Vanguardia”, page seven, March 20, 1912 (in the same edition, a review by Manuel de Montoliu on the translation into Catalan of *La Imitació de Jesucrist* by Miguel Pérez, 6-7)<sup>350</sup>:

*Proyectos Hidráulicos*

*S. M. el Rey recibió en audiencia al doctor F. S. Pearson, presidente del Consejo de administración de la Sociedad de Riegos y Fuerza del Ebro y otras sociedades industriales en España y América latina, acompañándole el abogado asesor don Luis Comulada. El doctor Pearson expuso á S. M. los vastos proyectos que las sociedades que dirige se proponen realizar en Cataluña. S.M. oyó complacido la exposición de dichos proyectos, demostrando exacto conocimiento del país y su interés por toda empresa que puede contribuir al desarrollo de la riqueza nacional.*<sup>351</sup>

Pearson and Montoliu were in the city together those years, 1911-1913. Did their paths ever cross? Part of this thesis is to propose possible contacts and relationships between Montoliu and

---

<sup>347</sup> Moret, Xavier. *L'home que va portar la llum a Catalunya*, 107-108.

<sup>348</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick\\_Stark\\_Pearson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Stark_Pearson). Accessed March 1, 2017.

<sup>349</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick\\_Stark\\_Pearson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Stark_Pearson). Accessed March 1, 2017.

<sup>350</sup> La Vanguardia.com. <http://hemeroteca-paginas.lavanguardia.com/LVE07/HEM/1912/03/20/LVG19120320-007.pdf>. Accessed March 2, 2017.

<sup>351</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick\\_Stark\\_Pearson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Stark_Pearson). Accessed March 1, 2017.

other “movers and shakers” of the time period – there are so many! – his brother, d’Ors, Maragall, de Sucre, Unamuno...

Montoliu was an *urbanista*, he participated in conferences on city development in general and urban garden space, and electricity, specifically. He undoubtedly was aware, for example, that the neighborhood of La Floresta of our day was named La Floresta Pearson, in honor of Pearson, a project whose plans were well under way before 1915, but which was named officially a year after the scientist and business man’s death.<sup>352</sup> Until further research uncovers (or does not uncover) these relationships and their extent and influence on Montoliu, I will continue in my attempt to make these links via the information available, in this case, the actual dates that Pearson was, if not living in Barcelona full-time, regularly passing through as he negotiated his way into the city.

Society & Politics: Social Transformation & Catalan Independence

*In every neighborhood, a school, a library and telephone center.*<sup>353</sup>

This objective was vital to the social and political developments at the time, as was the ideal of working together, as Montoliu offered in one of his lectures he gave at the Workers’ Institute, in 1903.<sup>354</sup>

*All participants absolutely equal in public discussion, all opinions respected and given equal consideration. We exclude only exclusion and intolerance. Cooperation is our preferred working method, a spirit of solidarity guides us.*<sup>355</sup>

---

<sup>352</sup> Moret, Xavier. *L’home que va portar la llum a Catalunya*, 35.

<sup>353</sup> Conversation with Professor Francesc Parcerisas, Ateneu courtyard, April 2015.

<sup>354</sup> Montoliu, Cebria. “Institucions de cultura social : conferències donades al “Institut Obrer Català” : moviment étic-social extensió universitària settlements Ruskin Halls universitat populars. (Barcelona: Tip. L’Avenç, 1903).



Some projects within this context were the modernization of hospitals, with hygiene as one of the foci and the modernization of schools, including the first proposal for bilingual secondary school. This was also the era when universities were opening to a larger part of the population. At the same time, this was also the era of budding unions and workers' insurance programs. It is also at this time that The Catalan Workers' Institute was founded. In short, the driving questions were: how do we plan for the expansion of cities for the multi-faceted benefit of all of its residents? Concurrently, how do we form a new society for this new era? Convince - then prepare each person, each citizen, to better contribute to these developments?

The State of Catalunya & Catalan, its language

Among so many key elements to the changing Catalonian society at this time were the two following crucial ones, both coming to fruition in 1906:

1. Enric Prat de la Riba i Sarrà's La Nacionalitat catalana, which is considered the first document laying out the desire as well as the parameters for a State of Catalunya.
2. The International Congress on the Catalan language, an effort spearheaded by M.A.M Alcover, but attended by Pompeu Fabra i Poch, for whom is named one of the universities in Barcelona. Fabra would follow up his presentation on "Questions of Spelling of the Catalan Language" about a decade later with *Gramática de la Llengua Catalana*, both which were clear attempts towards the normalization, if not promotion of the Catalan language. Many influential people were in attendance, including Miguel de Unamuno, writing to his friend, Joan Maragall of the event:

*...A muchos – yo soy uno – el paso de V. (Usted), con todo lo que personifica y representa, por Barcelona, en aquellos días del Congreso de la Lengua y de*

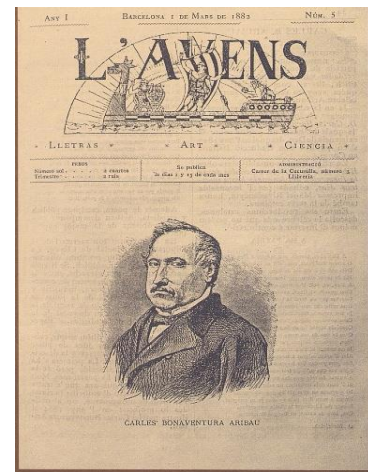
---

<sup>355</sup> Montoliu, Cebria. "Institucions de cultura social: conferències donades al "Institut Obrer Català", 1903.

*recrudescimiento de excitación social por varias causas, les tomó el aspecto de un acontecimiento histórico.*<sup>356</sup>

## Publications & Dissemination, or PR

A crucial factor in the promotion of these ideas was the writing and publications that went along with all these changes, that is, their dissemination and promotion. For example, in El Poble Català, La Veu de Catalunya, or with the magazine and publishing house, the same which would publish most of Montoliu's translations, l'Avenc. The "Glosari" was a daily column written by Eugeni d'Ors, the most influential intellectual at that time, and was in La Veu de Catalunya. D'Ors, born "Ors", used this platform to discuss topics far and wide, including Whitman and, especially, his place among the authors who people worth their cultural weight should read.



es.wikipedia.org

<sup>356</sup> Miguel de Unamuno to Joan Maragall, November 26, 1906.




Eugeni d'Ors / paisvalenciaseglexxi

Also quite telling of the times, was the fact that many publications included their “manifestos” on the inside front cover of each edition. A thesis could be devoted just to this phenomenon.

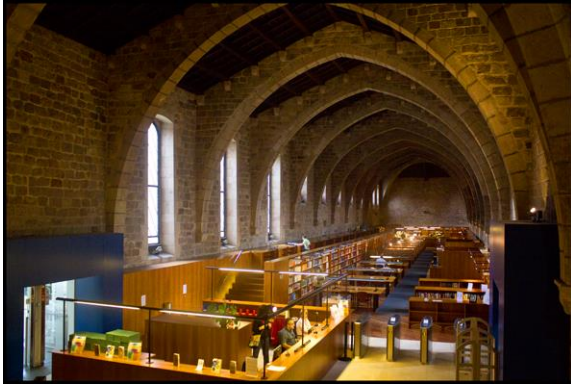
### The Mancomunitat

Another important development, and in the end, also another type of influence, promotion and the dissemination of ideas was the Mancomunitat founded by the same man, who I mentioned earlier, as the author of the La Nacionalitat Catalana, Enric Prat de la Riba i Sarrà.

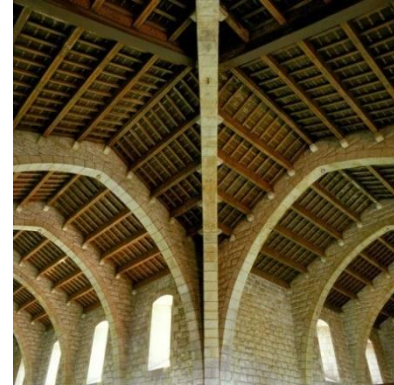


Prat de la Riba vom Ramon Casas 

The Mancomunitat, or Commonwealth, was a center which, for example, enlisted its members to give lectures in Barcelona and around the world and invited guest lecturers to Barcelona, for example, Maria Montessori on educational reform and Albert Einstein on his theory of relativity. According to what Collins says in her article, the city of Barcelona was “intent on opening a window toward modern urbanism”, and we could suppose that Montoliu, in this case, was supported in his endeavors to gather urban planning ideas from around Europe by the Diputació de Barcelona and/or the Mancomunitat. The Mancomunitat helped to found, in 1907, the Biblioteca de Catalunya, at the time called the Biblioteca del Institut d’Estudis Catalans, the library which opened to the public in 1914 as the Institut d’Estudis Catalans continued to be a more group-focused site of research. Both still in existence today.



BNC, sala de lectura / nuvol.com



BNC / bncatfilmcomission.com

From the Institute's website:

*L'any 1907, la Diputació de Barcelona, presidida per Enric Prat de la Riba, va prendre la «iniciativa de fundar un centre d'estudis científics, concretament especialitzats i destinats, més que no pas a l'ensenyament, a produir ciència i facilitar les investigacions, per saber directament tot allò que tenim de propi, i no haver d'aprendre dels estrangers allò que han estudiat a casa nostra...L'article primer del dictamen acord de constitució estableix que «es crea un centre d'estudis que s'anomenarà Institut d'Estudis Catalans i que tindrà per objecte la superior investigació científica de tots els elements de la cultura catalan ».*<sup>357</sup>



IEC / commonswikipedia.org



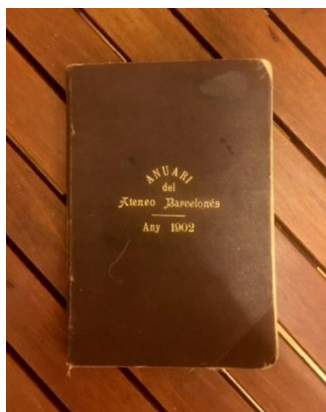
IEC / pinterest.com

The Ateneu, which has been a center of Catalan cultural promotion since its founding in 1860, has had a role to play throughout its history as such a center. From its website:

<sup>357</sup> IEC.CAT. Accessed March 2015. <http://www.iec.cat/activitats/entrada.asp>.

*L'embrió de l'Ateneu el trobem a mitjan segle XIX. El projecte de crear un Ateneu a la ciutat de Barcelona comença a plantejar-se entre professions liberals i la burgesia incipient des de 1835, com es pot veure als estatuts d'un hipotètic ateneu, publicats al Diari de Barcelona, que mai es va construir. No és fins al 1860 que es funda l'Ateneu Català, institució on podem trobar els orígens directes de l'Ateneu Barcelonès. La fusió d'aquest amb el Centro Mercantil Barcelonés (fruit al mateix temps de la unió entre el Casino Barcelonès i el Círculo Mercantil Barcelonés) es formalitza el 1872.<sup>358</sup>*

The influence of the Ateneu remained strong in Montoliu's era. On plaques at the site, one can read many of the names mentioned here, including Jacinto Verdaguer, Joan Maragall and D. Joan Güell. Gaudí was also a member. In at least the year 1902, when it is recorded in the "Anuari del Ateneu Barcelonés, Any 1902" found at the Fair of Old and Modern Book of Barcelona (2015) along the Passeig de Gracia, that Montoliu lived at Codols, 16, he was Vice-Secretary of the section "Literatura, Historia y Antiguetats". Keeping in mind the rapid urban growth and transformation of the period, the Ateneu's move to its present location, Canuda 6, around the corner from the socializing center of Els 4 Gats, in 1907, was met with complaints from members who thought this new locale, unlike Caputxins, 36-38, was too far from the city center.<sup>359</sup>



Ateneu Anuari 1902/ kaiser-veyrat

<sup>358</sup> Ateneubcn.org. Accessed March 2015. <http://www.ateneubcn.org/ateneu/historia/arrels-ateneu-barcelones-i-fundacio-1836-1906>.

<sup>359</sup> Conversation with Professor Francesc Parcerisas, in the Ateneu courtyard, March 2017.



Ateneu, Palau Savass / [arquitecturaxbarcelona.net](http://arquitecturaxbarcelona.net)



Ateneu, courtyard / [grupdelecturaenvuelta.blogspot.com](http://grupdelecturaenvuelta.blogspot.com)



From *Cebrià Montoliu*, a cura de Francesc Roca. Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1993, 53.

In the introduction to the publication from the 1993 day-long conference dedicated to Cebrià de Montoliu, its director and editor, Francesc Roca, of the University of Barcelona, begins with this sentence:

*Cebrià Montoliu es l'home invisible de la cultura moderna a Catalunya. I amb voluntat de projecció en tot el món neollatí, i a Iberoamèrica.*<sup>360</sup>

admitted that not much was known on Montoliu, that he was such an important actor in his era, but that, one, he had somehow fallen off the radar of historians, and that two, in researching Montoliu, Roca was struck by Montoliu's modesty and unwillingness to be in the spotlight,<sup>361</sup> for any of the multi-ranging activities for which he was the initiator, or in which he was involved. Furthermore, he is not the only one. Christianne Crasemann Collins, in her article, "Cebrià de Montoliu (1873-1923): Interpreter of modern urbanism", suggests Montoliu is one of the "invisible" planners of the period.<sup>362</sup> This is the backdrop against which we should view Montoliu, his life and activities in and away from Catalunya, and as well, the "reception" if you will, of the aforementioned, in particular, but not exclusively, in Catalunya and by Catalans.

Sometimes described as an architect, sometimes as an urbanist, or urban planner, not to mention, social activist, researcher, traveler, librarian, documentalist, translator – Cebrià de Montoliu was born in Palma, Mallorca in 1873 into a noble family from Tarragona, Catalunya to where the family moved back when Montoliu was still a young child.

The sixth of nine children, Montoliu grew up in a Spanish-speaking household, according to his brother Manuel in his *Memorias de Infancia y Adolescencia*, and was educated at Colegio de San

---

<sup>360</sup> Roca, Francesc, *Cebrià Montoliu (1873-1923)*, a cura de Francesc Roca, 1993, 11.

<sup>361</sup> Conversations and further email exchanges with Professor Francesc Roca. April, 2017.

<sup>362</sup> Crasemann Collins, Christianne. "Cebrià Montoliu (1873-1923), Interpreter of Modern Urbanism" *Aportacions catalanes en el camp de la urbanista i de l'ordenació del territori, des de Cerdà als nostres dies*. Richard Pié, Ed. (Barcelona: Societat Catalana d'Ordenació del Territori, filial de l'Institut d'Estudis Catalans, March 2017), 375. To note: one of the publishers of this collection of essays, is the aforementioned Institut d'Estudis Catalans.



Ignacio de Manresa by the Jesuits, along with his brothers, where, according to Manuel de Montoliu, they were educated “dentro del marco de las más auténtica moral cristiana – de tipo esencialmente espartano”<sup>363</sup> until his law studies took him to Barcelona. Montoliu would end up spending most of his adult life here, that is, when not traveling to Berlin, Paris, London and other cities in Europe to explore how town planners in each place were dealing with the tremendous growth of cities at this time in history across many countries in Europe. We do not know how much time Montoliu wanted to stay in the US, but when he died, in 1922, he seemed rather settled in his life there: he was with the same partner with whom he had come to the US, Lucia Blasian, originally from Romania, and they both had teaching positions at Washburn University in Kansas City, Missouri.<sup>364</sup>

---

<sup>363</sup> Montoliu de, Manuel. *Memorias de Infancia y Adolescencia* (Tarragona: Instituto de Estudios Tarraconenses “Ramon Berenguer IV” 1958), 180, 182.

<sup>364</sup> Montoliu was, then, raised in a conservatively Catholic family and was baptized in the Catholic Church. As an adult, however, he was not a practicing follower of the faith. I had also assumed – based on this noble, Catholic background, not to mention the times and the greater cultural context, that he and Lucia Blasian were married, as described, or assumed, in an article in the Washburn Review of May 23, 1923, when it was announced that “Prof. and Mrs. Montoliu in Romance Languages at Washburn, have accepted positions with a Boston commercial high school for next year”. Both said they regretted leaving Washburn, but had been advised by a doctor to leave the area due to Montoliu’s lung trouble. The following fall, after Cebrià Montoliu’s death that August, Lucia, also referred to as “Lucie” stayed on in Kansas City and was written up in the paper on September 12, 1923 as the new academic year’s teacher of both Spanish and French courses. It was once I was doing research in Tarragona this past March, and with the gracious assistance of the city library’s Director and staff, that I came across the author Salvador-J. Rovira i Gomez, and his studies on Catalan noble families, including the de Montolius. In his book, *Plàcid-Maria de Montoliu i de Sarriera: Primer Marquès de Montoliu (1828-1899)* (12th Premi d’Historia Gramunt i Subiela Premis Literaris Cuitat de Tarragona 2005. (Tarragona : Arols Editors, 2005), Mr. Rovira put together an admirable family tree on which, to my surprise, Cebrià is not listed along with his partner and does not have the symbol for “married” next to his name. Thanks to the help of the Tarragonese police, I was able to quickly locate the Civil Registry of Tarragona to look into this and one of the employees was intrigued, if not amused, by my request for Montoliu’s marriage record, if there were one. A week later he got back to me and said he could find no such record. Concurrently, I had reached out to the author of this work, also a professor at the University Rovira i Virgili, and he was kind enough to respond to me via email (March 30, 2017), saying that Montoliu had not, in fact, married. For him, this was in step with how Montoliu has chosen to live more generally. Another note on Montoliu and Blasian’s relationship: I had thought they had met, two newly arrived immigrants, both, among other things, in the US. However, in a letter from Montoliu to de Sucre, dated in August 19, 1920, Montoliu says to de Sucre, then traveling in France, that he can stop by and see “la meva dona” at their Paris apartment at Père de Notre Dame les Champs, 79, and that he, too, would be in Paris himself August 24, and back again from September 29 until the October 4 departure to the US.

The Montoliu family also had a home in Morell<sup>365</sup>, but their main residence was Cavallers, 10, Tarragona,<sup>366</sup> which has now been the city's Escola Conservatori de Música for more than twenty-five years.<sup>367</sup> Although the upstairs rooms have been converted into modern classrooms, the front foyer is still as the Montolius knew it: a grand entrance with a fountain off to the left and a wide staircase against the back wall. In accord with the times, there were many children, among which we find his sister, Maria del Pilar, a poet who published her collection of poems, *Ecos del Alma*<sup>368</sup> on the eve of taking her vows with a religious order; one brother, Francesc, a concern for the family, who practiced vegetarianism and Buddhism; and, of course Manuel de Montoliu, the well-known literary critic and translator of the day.

In keeping with the typical for the era, we know little of the mother but for her family lineage, and more about the father, Plàcid-Maria de Montoliu i de Sarriera. Plàcid was a supporter of Alfonso XII, and wrote a treatise in support of him. Once the royalty conflict was settled, and Alfonso finished first, he gave Plàcid the title and role of Marquès and the “de” on his name as a show of his appreciation. Cebrià would refuse the “noble” preposition, Manuel would not. The current Marquès, to this day living in Tarragona, also has kept the distinction to his name.

Montoliu's father wrote in support of royalty and his preferred king, but he also wrote about his city and issues of clean water supply. This text is entitled, “Aguas potables de Tarragona”, deals with the “judicial title” to water and was published in 1885.<sup>369</sup> This part of Plàcid-Maria de

---

<sup>365</sup> *El Castell del lloc del Morell: Aspectes historics i de la restauracio del casal dels Montoliu*. Directo i Coordinacio: Valldosera i Cata & Granell i March, Jordi, Ed: Ajuntament del Morell 1778-1994.

<sup>366</sup> *Tarragona La Imatge i el Temps* Enric Olive, Jordi Pique, F. Xavier Ricoma. (Ajuntament de Tarragona: February, 1990).

<sup>367</sup> Visited in spring 2017 and read more on the website: <http://www.dipta.cat/cmtarragona/>.

<sup>368</sup> de Montoliu y de Togores, Maria del Pilar. *Ecos del Alma*. (Barcelona : Eudaldo Puig, 1889).

<sup>369</sup> Salvador-J. Rovira i Gomez. Plàcid-Maria de Montoliu i Sarriera: *Primer Marquès de Montoliu (1828-1899)* (12th Premi d'Historia Gramunt i Subiela Premis Literaris Cuitat de Tarragona 2005. (Tarragona : Arols Editors, 2005), 149.

Montoliu's writing life could have provided an example of civic concern and involvement of which Cebrià took note.

It is worth noting to that in the family, especially after reading Montoliu's study on Whitman, in which his appreciation of Whitman's spirituality, if not his seemingly understanding of and excitement about it, there were at least two siblings with strong spiritual bents themselves. Montoliu's sister, who wrote poetry within the practicing Catholic context of the family and greater cultural environment of often a spiritual nature, and then her taking vows to become part of a convent. Also Montoliu's brother, Francesc, seems to have been quite the searcher. He troubled the father with his strong interest, and talent for water sports and all things nautical, and, of course, when he told his family he was giving up the Catholic faith. According to Manuel, again, as stated in his *Memorias*, the father felt a personal responsibility for this son gone off the path the father had tried to set before him. He blamed this foreign practice of vegetarianism for F's ill health when he finally agreed to come back to Tarragona from Madrid, where he been leading a theosophic group. He never recovered and died at home at the age of 33.

What's in a Name? A Signature?

The use of pseudonyms, of course, is not new to the modern era. There are many examples of authors using pseudonyms throughout the ages, whether for political and/or personal reasons. "Anonymous", too, has protected writers from being exposed for who they were, or, as the case may be, what they were. However, the use of pseudonyms in Catalunya at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries makes one think that it was either a typical cultural practice of long-standing; a way to wear many literary, social or political hats, for a time that seemed to call for this; or simply, in fashion, for what purpose did a pseudonym serve if the majority of people knew who the "real" writer, for instance in the case of Eugeni d'Ors and "Xenius"?

Walt Whitman did not use a pseudonym in his publications, however, nor did he sign, at least in words, his 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. His name cannot be found on the title page of the book, nor can it be found at the conclusion of his lengthy introduction to the work. We have, of course, the famous photo on the left-hand cover, across from the title of the book, and, below: “Brooklyn, New York: 1855”, but it is not until line 498 of the poem that we have a name that we suppose we can link to the person in the title section photo:

*Walt Whitman, an American, one of the roughs, a kosmos,  
Disorderly fleshy and sensual...eating drinking and breeding,  
No sentimentalist...no stander above men and women or  
Apart from them....no more modest than immodest.*<sup>370</sup>

In his life as a journalist, Whitman began with Walter, but then decided to identify himself apart from his father, also Walter. The real estate ads placed in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, as we shall see the “Walt Whitman: Life and Times and Mind” chapter of this dissertation, appeared the same day as one of the first recorded advertisements for *Leaves of Grass*, and informs the interested reader to contact “Mr. Whitman” for further details. Was our Walt the contact and spokesperson for his father’s carpentry and real estate business? Karen Karbiener suggests this in her article, “Brooklyn and Manhattan”, remarking, that:

*By 1853, real estate advertisements Whitman placed suggest that “W. Whitman” was literally a household word, which may have encouraged him to leave this tagged name off of his first book of poems in 1855.*<sup>371</sup>

Perhaps Whitman was already so known as Walter or “W.” Whitman in the very neighborhood where he would publish his poetry, that he decided to differentiate himself, not necessarily from his father, but from himself as carpenter and/or real estate developer. It should be noted here as well, that Whitman could be thought of as differentiating himself from his literary fathers in that

---

<sup>370</sup> Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass*. (1855), 54. 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition. (New York: Penguin Classics, 2005).

<sup>371</sup> Karbiener, Karen. “Brooklyn and Manhattan” . *Walt Whitman in Context* (ed. Joanna Levin and Ed Whitley, Cambridge UP, 2018).

his name was at the most, two names, never three, like Ralph Waldo Emerson or Henry David Thoreau.

Modesty is usually not a quality we attribute to Whitman, so here we are, imagining other reasons why Whitman would decide to leave his name off of the book's credits. There is the possibility, of course, that he did it for metaphoric reasons. His work is often described in the context of the body, as we shall see in the analysis of Montoliu's study on him later in the chapter, "Montoliu's Work on Whitman" of this dissertation. The physical presence, of both the book, and the man who wrote it, are one and the same, as Whitman reminds of, and we are holding the man as we hold his creation. We could suppose that Whitman wanted the reader's first *impression* of him to be that of a body, a healthy, "old and young" body, an unnamed body, like both the average working person...and the universal poet. Immodest and modest, in fact, at the same time.

Montoliu and modesty, on the other hand, seem to, in the opinion of many scholars, to go hand in hand. Montoliu also begins by delineating his name, and thus, in this case quite clearly, his personal and political self. One would also be hard-pressed to find a publication written in Montoliu's hand signed Cebrià de Montoliu y de Togores, although it was not completely uncommon at the time in Spain to include one's full name as a signature. Additionally, as we have seen and will continue to bear witness to as this dissertation advances, Montoliu was a democrat, working from and towards democratic principles, and a "de" before his name was not a tag he chose to bear. On the other hand, when he was not using pseudonyms or "signing" writings anonymously, he did seem to be searching somewhat for a version of his name in print that felt comfortable. In his survey and analysis of the Berlin and Dusseldorf exhibitions of 1910, for instance, he signs the publication "Cipriano Montoliu". Was this just his adjusting his name

to go along with the text, which he had chosen to write in Spanish? Was this common practice in the day, that is, for a Catalan to change his name to the “Spanish version” of it for a Spanish-speaking audience? It no longer seems current, if it ever was, in any case. As Montoliu goes on with his life and his expository production, it seems he uses more and more often “Cebrià”, no matter the supposed audience at hand.

On questions of modesty, and how naming or the inclusion of a name in one’s own publication plays into these questions, yes, there are some examples worth considering. For instance, as Francesc Roca points out: there is no dedication at all in Montoliu’s first published translation, John Ruskin’s *Fragments*. Furthermore, on the title page of his translation of Ruskin’s *Nature*, Montoliu does have himself listed, and as “Cebrià Montoliu”, but his dedication is signed “El Traductor”. Did Montoliu find putting his name here, again, would be repetitive, if not immodest? Was it a stylistic question? He does, however, in the first paragraph of his introduction, mention, or, promote, his other translation of Ruskin, *Fragments*. Then, at the end of his introduction, he takes the time to say:

*Advertit, donchs, el lector de lo inaccessible de ma tasca, aqui li presento ’l meu trevall dihentli « com un pintor en un museu d’obras mestres, ó mellor, en una excursió per un país de fadas, he trevallat llargas horas en copiar lo que no pot copiarse...Si algún pálit reflex del meu model pots fruhir encar en mos borralls, satisfet quedaré de la meva obra...si t’enuitjo, sols te pregaré una cosa : que pensis en el fi m’ha guiat y no m’ho retreguis. »*<sup>372</sup>

Seven years later, it is not only the spelling of “treballar” that changed.<sup>373</sup> Montoliu, by now having translated Shakespeare’s *MacBeth* and Whitman in the interim – and he did sign his name to *Fulles d’Herba*, although this work, too, went to print without a dedication. He also signed his

---

<sup>372</sup> Ruskin, John. *Nature*. Translated by Cebrià Montoliu. (Barcelona: Publicacio Joventut, 1903), xi.

<sup>373</sup> In the translation of Ruskin’s *Nature* (1903), the verb was written as “trevallar” In this 1909 publication, “treballar”. Is this a small piece of evidence of the effect of Pompeu Fabra’s “Questions of Spelling of the Catalan Language”, presented at the 1906 Conference of the Catalan language was having on the development of the language?

study on Whitman, *L'home i sa tasca* (1913), however, Montoliu, in his introduction to his in-depth analysis and Whitman, instead of referring to his previously published translation of Whitman poems, which would have been natural, and even potentially helpful to the reader, he extends an “overdue” homage to French translator, Léon Bazalgette’s translation of Whitman, and this, in the introduction’s very first sentence.

Montoliu seems a bit more confident in his translation of Emerson’s *Self-Confidence* and *Friendship*, dedicating, for example, approximately five pages to “La Present Traducció”.<sup>374</sup> Firstly, Montoliu explains why, among all of Emerson’s writings, he chose these two essays to translate: saying that they, “entre totes, la més emersonians de ses obres, la revelació més franca i més feliç de sa personalitat.”<sup>375</sup> Referring to his translation itself, he, again, warns the reader as he did in his Ruskin translation, but goes on to speak in broader terms, in terms of translation, than he did in his Ruskin introduction, stating that for him, as for all Emerson translators, Emerson remains almost untranslatable, so connected is his style to the intimate nature of the anglo-american spirit.<sup>376</sup>

For Montoliu, the hardest part of translating Emerson was the concise aspect of the language, saying, not without irony:

*és tan extrema la [la concisió] d’Emerson, que dubto que en lloc, entre totes les literatures puguin trobar-se exemples més feliçment elaborats d’aquesta gran qualitat de llenguatge.*<sup>377</sup>

Within this context, Montoliu shares that he preferred to err on the side of a literal translation in this work, not wanting to spell out for the reader all of what he sees as Emerson’s reticent ways

---

<sup>374</sup> Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Self-Confidence and Friendship*. Translated by Cebrià Montoliu. (Barcelona: L’Avenç 1904, 22-7.

<sup>375</sup> Emerson, *Self-Confidence and Friendship*, 22.

<sup>376</sup> Emerson, *Self-Confidence and Friendship*, 22.

<sup>377</sup> Emerson, *Self-Confidence and Friendship*, 25.

of expression. So we see Montoliu having developed as a translator, and gaining confidence in his opinions of the craft of it, even if, in the end, he scurries back into his modesty shell, saying:

*Sigui com vulguí, no tinc l'ambició de presentar res de perfet ni definitiu, i prego al lector perdó per les tares d'un treball que sols a títol d'assaig públic.*<sup>378</sup>

If Montoliu is this way vis-a-vis his translations, we can attest to, on the contrary, even a type of – dare we say? – self-promotion on the paratexts of his own original writings. On the author page of his analysis of the expositions of Berlin and Dusseldorf (1913), for example, Montoliu is not satisfied with simply having his name appear, but has his name followed by a few lines of roles he played, a sort of mini-CV, if you will. Underneath his name, in this case, are three lines. They are self-explanatory, so I will just list them here as they appear:

*Secretario de la “Sociedad Cívica, La Ciudad Jardín”*

*Bibliotecario del Museu Social de Barcelona*

*Pensionado por la Junta de Aplicación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas.*<sup>379</sup>

On the author page his publication *La ciutat jardí* (1912), only “*Bibliotecario del Museu Social de Barcelona* » is listed. Knowing many of the different roles Montoliu had – from Librarian to Secretary to Editor, one wonders why he didn't list more, if appropriate to the text at hand, although, of course, as in one of the *raisons-d'être* of pseudonyms, perhaps Montoliu was very conscience of not mixing some roles with others, so as to not confuse the issue, or so as to not confuse, or irritate the reader and potential convert to his ideas. He did not, as far as we know have a *nom de plume*, and, as far as we have been able to ascertain, his “pseudonyms” were the

---

<sup>378</sup> Emerson, *Self-Confidence and Friendship*, 27.

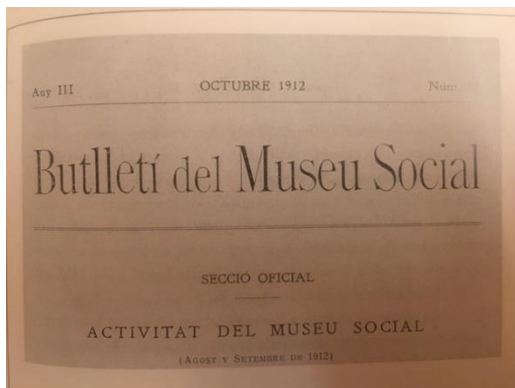
<sup>379</sup> Montoliu, Cipriano. *Las modernas ciudades y sus problemas á la luz de la Exposición de contrucción cívica de Berlin (1910) con un apéndice sobre otros certámenes análogos*. Barcelona: Sociedad cívica [de] la ciudad jardín. 1913.



basic “C.M” and the occasional “M”.<sup>380</sup> His time was an ebullient one of the inflow of ideas, but there “camps” remained and it might have been to one’s advantage to be able to pick and choose one’s self-description, or even, name.

### Professional Life

From the time of his arrival in Barcelona, Montoliu was also translating and we will look at these in more detail a little further on. He was additionally, through the Institute of Social Culture, regularly giving lectures on current issues and the changes taking place in society to workers in and around Barcelona – and how they could be active participants in them.



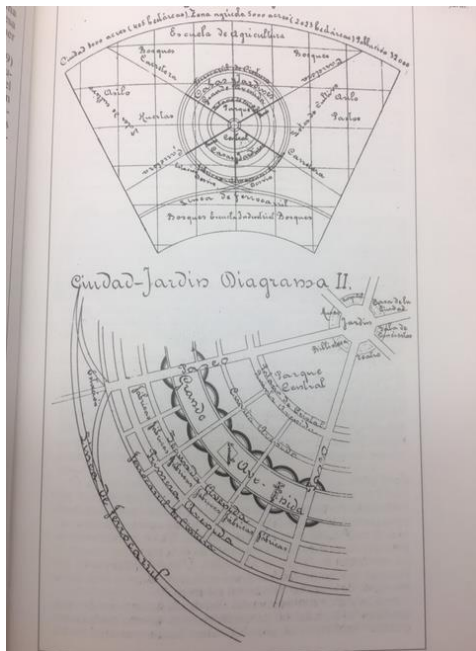
*Cebrià Montoliu*, a cura de Francesc Roca. Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1993, 81.

From 1909 until his departure for the United States in 1920, Montoliu worked at the Museu Social de Barcelona, or, the Social Museum of Barcelona, modeled on the Musée Sociale in Paris and which he himself founded and ran. This is another example of Montoliu being a participant in his times, for as points out, civic museums were springing up “like mushrooms” from the late 19<sup>th</sup> c. His work here as a librarian/documentalist is considered the first example of such work in Spain, preceding, as it did, for a time, any program of formal training for this type of position.

---

<sup>380</sup> Roca, *Cebrià Montoliu*, 18.

These museums, moreover, were part and parcel of this “new science” of city planning and the advancement of the idea that these growing and multiplying modern cities were a subject for intellectual inquiry.<sup>381</sup> They held informative lectures and exhibitions, and Montoliu’s was no exception.<sup>382</sup> For Collins, this was fodder for those with true pioneer spirits (recalls opinions on Whitman) specialists from a variety of fields, such as architecture and sociology, if not multi-faceted individuals with foresight like Montoliu.



From *Cebrià Montoliu*, a cura de Francesc Roca. Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1993, 19.

In terms of his urban planning focus, Montoliu’s chosen area of expertise and activism was the ‘Garden City’. A key person in the diffusion of new ideas on modern urban culture, through his own studies and ideas as well as his curiosity, and availability, to travel throughout Europe to learn from others’ examples of how to manage the duo of exponential growth paired with technological changes and gather a selection of “best practices” that he could then promote back in Catalunya. As Collins via Ribas i Piera and Soria points out, in this “torbellino”, the diffusion

<sup>381</sup> Crasemann Collins, “Cebrià Montoliu (1873-1923), Interpreter of Modern Urbanism”, 376.

<sup>382</sup> Crasemann Collins, “Cebrià Montoliu (1873-1923), Interpreter of Modern Urbanism”, 378.

of ideas was not just in one direction.<sup>383</sup> It was more akin to, if you will, a storm of cyclical need, action, sharing and local cultural and social adaptations...*et ainsi de suite*. Montoliu himself says “Será bueno tomar nota de las experiencias ajenas que puedan servirnos de guía.”<sup>384</sup>

To provide himself with a platform for his own participation in this flurry of ideas and efforts, a place where he could share his thoughts on what he was seeing across Europe, Montoliu, in 1912, founded the Societat Cívica: la Ciutat-Jardí, or the Civic Society: The Garden City, and its publication, Civitas: butlletí de propaganda de la Ciutat Jardí. Montoliu’s ciutat jardí differed from the limited growth model and the open-ended “Ciudad lineal”, both debated then, and now. But it was Montoliu’s travels that first brought him to Collins’ attention, not his reasonable idea on how to manage urban growth, if not sprawl. Collins recounts that it was thanks to Montoliu’s travels, that is, to Montoliu’s travels and reporting and publishing on them that she discovered him. Researching the City Planning Exhibition of Berlin and Dusseldorf of 1910, she happened upon Montoliu’s – according to Richard Pié, “magnífic”<sup>385</sup> and Collins, “perceptive and far-sighted”<sup>386</sup>– synopsis of this event in his “Las modernas ciudades y sus problemas a la luz de la Exposición de Construcción Cívica de Berlín (1910)” in which Montoliu proposes a compendium of the:

---

<sup>383</sup> Crasemann Collins, “Cebrià Montoliu (1873-1923), Interpreter of Modern Urbanism”, 379.

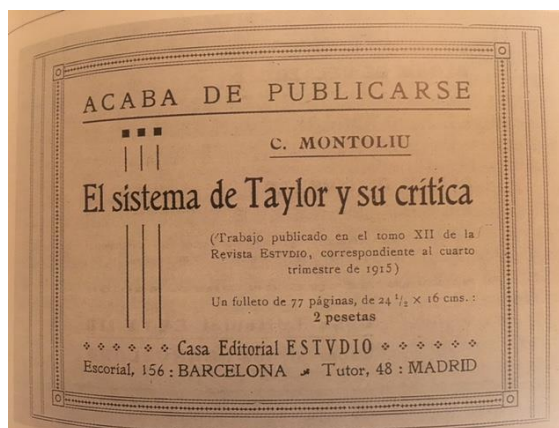
<sup>384</sup> Montoliu, Cipriano. *Las modernas ciudades y sus problemas á la luz de la Exposición de contrucción cívica de Berlin (1910) con un apéndice sobre otros certámenes análogos*. (Barcelona: Sociedad cívica [de] la ciudad jardín, 1913), 103.

<sup>385</sup> Pié, Richard. *Aportacions catalanes en el camp de la urbanista i de l’ordenació del territori, des de Cerdà als nostres dies*. (Barcelona: Societat Catalana d’Ordenació del Territori, filial de l’Institut d’Estudis Catalans, March 2017), 31.

<sup>386</sup> Crasemann Collins, “Cebrià Montoliu (1873-1923), Interpreter of Modern Urbanism”, 378.

*Nueva disciplina cívica, cuyos fecundos ensayos e investigaciones son, desde algún tiempo, objeto de un intenso cultivo por parte de los espíritus más selectos de la sociedad mundial contemporánea.*<sup>387</sup>

Once again we see the importance of the dissemination of these new ideas on this new discipline and Montoliu's appreciation of it. He studied Frederick Winstow Taylor, and then published an article on him, "El Sistema de Taylor y su crítica" (1916).<sup>388</sup> Taylor, a trained engineer, was an expert on work processes, or how to transform the work place from the 19<sup>th</sup> c. model to something, yes, emphasizing efficiency, but also a more open and ostensibly more positive relationship between the working and owner classes.<sup>389</sup> Additionally, through both the publishing wing of the Societat Cívica: la Ciutat Jardí and Civitas: butlletí de propaganda de la Ciutat Jardí, Montoliu published pamphlets and many articles, including, not surprisingly, on the ciutat jardí, "La cooperación en el movimiento de las ciudades jardines" (1913) and on England's and Germany's efforts at creating what we might now term now as an urban quality of life with a sustainable future...something else Montoliu and his colleagues foresaw...



Frederick Winstow Taylor / faculty.virginia.edu From *Cebrià Montoliu*, a cura de Francesc Roca. Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1993, 109.

<sup>387</sup> Montoliu, Cipriano. "Las modernas ciudades y sus problemas á la luz de la Exposición de contrucción cívica de Berlin (1910, con un apéndice sobre otros certámenes análogos. (Barcelona: Sociedad cívica [de] la ciudad jardín, 1913), 30.

<sup>388</sup> Montoliu, Cebria. « El Sistema de Taylor y su crítica » *Estudio*, vol XII. (Barcelona, 1916).

<sup>389</sup> Montoliu, Cebria. « El Sistema de Taylor y su crítica » *Estudio*, vol XII. (Barcelona, 1916).

Moreover, for Collins, both Montoliu's Societat Cívica: La Ciutat-Jardí and his involvement in Fairhope, an "organic" community, demonstrate how he was, if not in the avant-garde, then wholly with his time, concerned with the new city and how to live well in it, in that he believed that a scientific approach to these questions was needed as a basis for shepherding this development in a direction that would be for the benefit society, not to its detriment. Montoliu was at the forefront of the new discipline of "civic science", the counterpart to another budding discipline of the time, "civic art".<sup>390</sup> For Montoliu, the city was an "instrumento" that promotes a wide range of issues, from economics to "habitación común", but it also serves a cultural function as the repository of the collective and communal spirit of its residents.<sup>391</sup> And this word civic, for the ever democratically-spirited Montoliu, meant citizen participation in urban planning and decision-making, as this drawing below, from Civitas, communicates.



From Cebrià Montoliu, a cura de Francesc Roca. Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1993, 21.

We shall see later, as well, in Montoliu's ideas on Whitman's poetry and its development, that another important concept for him was "organic". Montoliu called his city plan for Fairhope, "organic" and strived to have his ciutat jardí manifest the reality of its space and to be a natural

<sup>390</sup> Crasemann Collins, Christiane. "Cebrià Montoliu (1873-1923), Interpreter of Modern Urbanism", 379.

<sup>391</sup> Crasemann Collins, Christiane. "Cebrià Montoliu (1873-1923), Interpreter of Modern Urbanism", 379.

fit for its residents. Like many of his peers at the time, he was particularly concerned with adequate, hygienic and affordable housing – perhaps another reason why he was attracted to the Fairhope project, and when he gave lectures to convince people of his vision, he used the term “utopia práctica” and, again, in his book on the Berlin exposition, he stated as such that he was convinced of this coming together of idea and material reality:

*La concepción orgánica de la ciudad, como un todo complejo y completo...al impulso de las nuevas corrientes (de ese nuevo pensamiento orgánico) observamos como los campos de la teoría y la práctica van reduciendo poco a poco sus distancias.<sup>392</sup>*

Before leaving and once in the US, Montoliu exchanged the aforementioned letters with de Sucre, in which he more than in one letter, asks de Sucre if he has yet been in touch with a certain Fiske Warren, an economist involved in the Fairhope project, but apparently living in Boston.<sup>393</sup> We cannot know if he ever received a response from de Sucre on this topic, or if he ever met Fiske Warren, but it seems he could have once he was in Fairhope, where he stayed on a few months and where he presented his “Organic City”, a plan which was published in The American City in April, 1921, in Civitas in October, 1921 under the title, “L’obra d’en Montoliu a Amèrica”, and in the Fairhope Chronicle in January of 1922.<sup>394</sup> His plan, according to Collins, respected what already existed in Fairhope and, adhering to the Garden City<sup>395</sup> idea of limited growth, included zoning that provided for commercial, industrial and residential districts, and a “sylvan zone”, that is, a park system surrounding and penetrating the urban nucleus. Montoliu suggested an agricultural school in a park next to one of Fairhope’s two gullies, thought a

---

<sup>392</sup> Montoliu, Cipriano. “Las modernas ciudades y sus problemas á la luz de la Exposición de contrucción cívica de Berlín (1910, con un apéndice sobre otros certámenes análogos. (Barcelona: Sociedad cívica [de] la ciudad jardín, 1913), 102-3.

<sup>393</sup> Cebrià Montoliu to Josep M. de Sucre, August 19, 1919.

<sup>394</sup> Crasemann Collins, Christiane. “Cebrià Montoliu (1873-1923), Interpreter of Modern Urbanism”, 385.

<sup>395</sup> The Garden City Movement is a method of urban planning that was initiated in 1898 by Sir Ebenezer Howard in the United Kingdom. Garden cities were intended to be planned, self-contained communities surrounded by “greenbelts”, containing proportionate areas of residences, industry, and agriculture. En.wikipedia.org. Accessed March 2016. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garden\\_city\\_movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garden_city_movement).

combination of thoroughfares and “simply streets” might be better than the then current lay-out of a uniformly-sized streets, and in the center, there would be the collection of public service buildings, such as City Hall, the public library, post office, chamber of commerce and community club with the “academic forum”, in Fairhope’s case, the Organic School, not far from the heart of the town.<sup>396</sup> In terms of prioritizing the town’s school location, we know that Montoliu was interested in the Organic School from a pedagogical standpoint, and that this interest in this particular school followed in step with the interest he had already shown in education in general in Barcelona, not only in terms of providing information to workers, a population who had been previously been excluded from adult education, but through the publication he founded and directed, the Universitat Catalana: revista mensual d’educació nacional: orgue de les entitats escolars i docents Catalans.<sup>397</sup>

In short, Montoliu adhered to his convictions, stating:

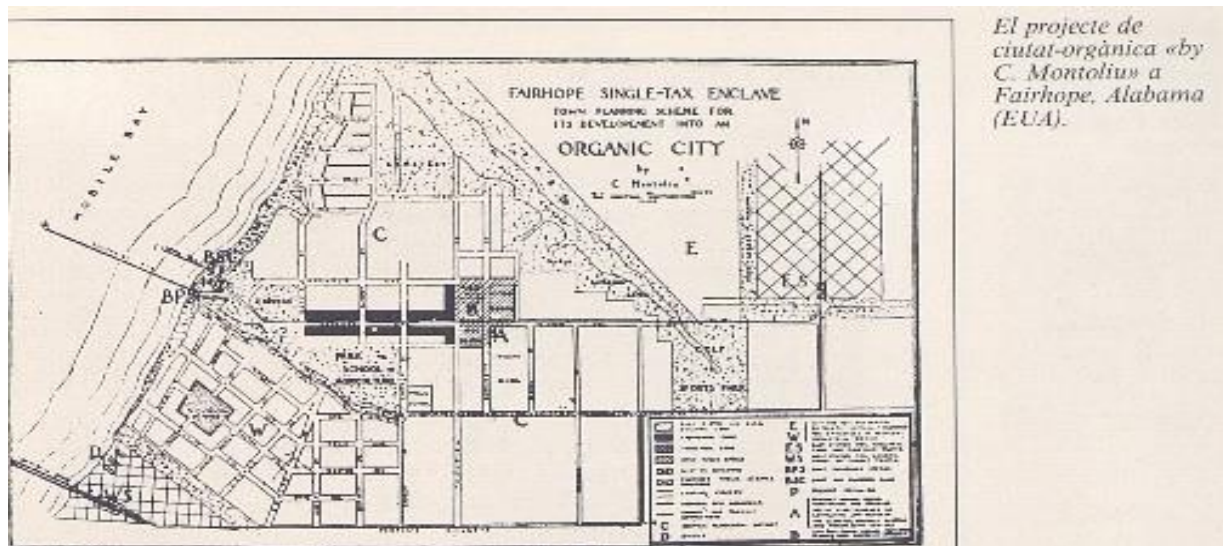
*By far, the most important feature of the present division and, in the deeper sense, the very marrow of our organic system, is the large, open space provided in the center of the town as the site for an adequate organ of the civic spirit or the public life of the whole community.*<sup>398</sup>

---

<sup>396</sup> Crasemann Collins, Christiane. “Cebrià Montoliu (1873-1923), Interpreter of Modern Urbanism”, 386.

<sup>397</sup> Barcelona: Tip. L’Avenç, 1904.

<sup>398</sup> Montoliu, Cebria. *Fairhope – A Town-Planning Scheme for its Development into an Organic City*. The American City, New York, vol.24, no.4, April 1921, 359.



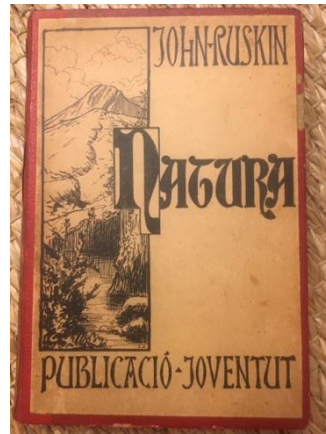
From *Cebrià Montoliu*, a cura de Francesc Roca. Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1993, 21.

### Montoliu, Translator

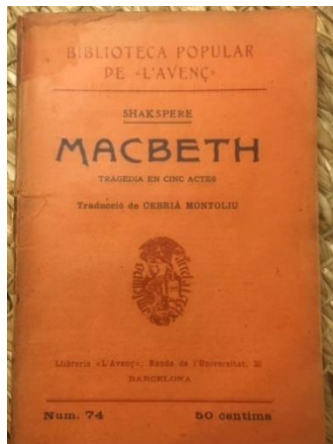
Montoliu had translated quite a list of authors preceding that of his of Whitman published in 1909. First of all, he had translated more strictly from his sector, the art critic he much admired, John Ruskin, in 1901, *Fragments* and in 1903, *Nature*. It is surprising here that he did not then go on to translate William Morris, another person Montoliu read. He then went on to translate Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of MacBeth* in 1907. Two of Ralph Waldo Emerson's essays, *Self-Reliance and Friendship*, were published in 1910 - after Montoliu's selection of twenty-three poems by Whitman. Montoliu, like Bazalgette, worked from the last edition of *Leaves of Grass*, that of 1891-2.<sup>399</sup> All these translated works were published by L'Avenç publishers.

<sup>399</sup> For a list of these poems with both the original English title and Montoliu's translations, please see Appendix 11.





Ruskin / theguardian.com



From Professor's Parcerisas' book collection

Cebrià Montoliu, Translator of Walt Whitman

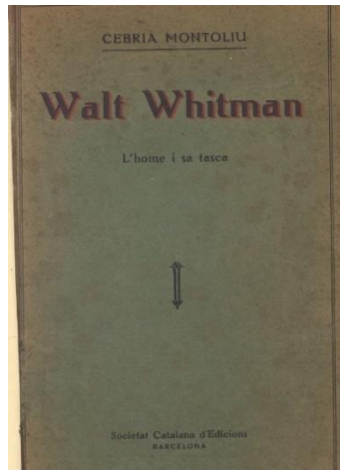
Why and how then, did Montoliu come to translate Whitman?



If I have taken the time to describe the world in which Montoliu was working, it is to emphasize the fact that Montoliu was born into wealth and had time for his own chosen projects, whether they were paid work or not, and was among others born into similar economic milieus who spent a good part of their time trying to figure out how to best form a new society for the new technological and much more urban reality.

His mother was a poet, and one of his brothers, Manuel, was one of the most famous literary critics of the era, and they worked among the most influential artistic and socio-political voices of their time, including the equivalent in other countries. For example, Eugeni d'Ors, in his Glosari, a regular column in La Veu de Catalunya, as mentioned above, wrote a column on Léon Bazalgette's French translation of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (from the Deathbed edition of 1891-2) and had his eye, and pen, on social, political and cultural developments in France and elsewhere at the time.

It is important that Walt Whitman was a known and appreciated author at this time among this group of intellectuals. Over the six years of his Glosari, d'Ors makes regular mention of Walt Whitman, whether it be in his listings of great world literature to read, or specifically examining Whitman's poetry and metrics. Additionally, as we see from the initial quotation of this presentation, Montoliu regarded Whitman very highly at the very least for a porter of what he saw as the spirit necessary to bring the world into modern life in the best of ways.



But Montoliu not only translated poems from *Leaves of Grass*, but went further and, in 1913, also published a critical work on Whitman entitled: *Walt Whitman: The Man and his Work*, in which he examines not only the life of Whitman, the “Social Poet” as he calls him, in the context of an Anglo-Saxon culture he believes is the hope for the future, but also Whitman’s poetry itself beginning with defining as he sees them: Whitman’s philosophy, ethics and what he may have bequeathed to us through his poetry.

What I find particularly interesting in this study is his Appendices, one on the then still controversial Whitman line and metric - and not just Whitman’s personality- but also on the “sexual question”. In this appendix, Montoliu discusses Whitman sexuality, although talking about homosexuality as though it might be something against which Whitman, or Montoliu for Whitman at this point, he would have to defend himself. Elsewhere, though not here, Montoliu points out Whitman’s egalitarian attitude towards women, and also brings in some poems where Whitman is addressing issues such as women being equal partners in society as men, and, still almost unheard of at the time, women being sexual creatures, just as men were.

In 1919, at the age of 47, Montoliu left Spain to go live in an Anglo-Saxon culture he had long-admired, the United States. He left Barcelona with a feeling of disappointment, if not disgust, at what he saw as private sector interests already taking hold of the city so that the social changes he and his entourage, wanted stood little chance of coming to fruition. This, despite this expansive's group's powerful standing in society; an expansive group containing a variety of opinion, doubt and suspicion, without a doubt. In any case, Montoliu thought there was more possibility in what he saw as a predominant atmosphere of openness in the US.

As a bridge to this experience in the US, since the letters of Montoliu to de Sucre originate in both Catalunya and in the US, Montoliu, once in the US, writes of his involvement promoting Hispanic literature in the US under the auspices of the “Harvard Hispanic Book Institute” at Harvard University, although extensive research on this question – working with Harvard College’s library, and its indefatigable and generous librarian, as well as the Boston Public Library, the Cambridge Public Library and Cambridgehistory.org, searching all sorts of combinations of wording for this supposed organization, academic teachers’ listing at that time period has turned up nothing to confirm this claim, although in one letter in particular, it is the highlight of the conversation – and is written on organizational stationary, with its supposed address of 26, Sacramento Street.

What has been confirmed here is: that, one, Montoliu, along with his partner, Lucia Blasian, disembarked the *Savoie* in New York in October 1919. There are also records of both Blasian and Montoliu teaching languages at Middlebury College in Vermont in 1921 – post Boston and pre-Washburn College? - with Blasian listed as coming from Arcadia University in Nova Scotia, and her specifically listed among “visiting faculty” at Middlebury.

Once in Kansas City, a student newspaper reported Montoliu to have been a teacher at Harvard College, but, according to the Harvard University Archives who checked holdings of course catalogs, faculty lists, published University annual reports, and student newspapers for the 1921-1922 time period found that “none of these...list Cebrià (de) Montoliu as a faculty member or lecturer at Harvard University during that time period”.<sup>400</sup>

With the generous assistance of the librarian at Washburn University, Ms. Martha Imperato, we know that in the academic year 1922-23, both Montoliu and Blasian were on the faculty list of Washburn University in Kansas City, both as French and Spanish teachers; we know also of an article in the Washburn Review, dated September 13, 1922, welcoming them to the university that fall. In the end, Montoliu, bothered by health problems from a young age, died only three years after arriving in the US, apparently from complications from kidney disease, on a road trip west with Lucia. They were in Albuquerque, New Mexico when Montoliu died, and Montoliu is buried here. There was an obituary on his death published in an Albuquerque paper, a Washburn College campus newsletter, and also an obituary published in Civitas. Lucia would go on to publish a tri-lingual collection of poetry – signed “L. de M.”, speaking of names and naming - entitled *Poèmes: Sans rime, ni raison*, among which figures the poem “A Cipriano”.<sup>401</sup>

A shorter life, as things go, but one full of good will, art and contribution. He lived and worked not only in the “America of Spain”, but in the US as well. His words from 1913 seem to see this future already developing:

---

<sup>400</sup> Email exchange with the Harvard University Archives reference staff, [archives\\_reference@harvard.edu](mailto:archives_reference@harvard.edu), march 13, 2017.

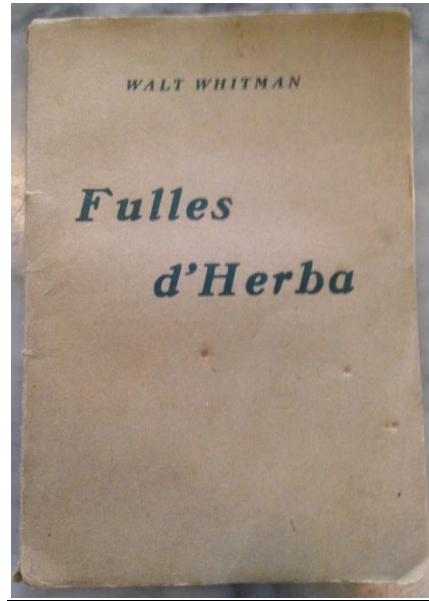
<sup>401</sup> Please see Appendix 15.

*No per res s'ha dit de Catalunya l'Amèrica d'Espanya, i així ha estat ben de raó que le nostre antic dipòsit de llibertat humana fos el primer de saludar en llengua hispànica el noble crit de deslliurança amb què el gran bard vident de la Democràcia volgué fer cantar el cor d'Amèrica i, per son entremig, el cor del món.*

It's not for nothing that Catalonia is said to be the America of Spain and it was thanks to this that our ancient vessel of human freedom was the first of the Hispanic languages to greet the noble cries of generosity with which the great bard of Democracy wanted to sing the heart of America, and together with it, that of the world!

## 3.2. Cebrià Montoliu: Work on Whitman

### 3.2.1 The Poems: *Fulles d'Herba*



If people from all walks of life have come and continue to come to Whitman for the same infinite amount of possibility of what may speak to them therein, Montoliu was no exception. I think it is fair to say that Montoliu was an activist – social, political, environmental, with a strong spiritual sensibility – more than a literary writer, let alone poet. He was interested in the social, political and spiritual aspects of Whitman’s work, of its content, more than its meter, although and equally, Montoliu was no stranger to things literary either, as his entourage, reading list and his choice to translate Shakespeare and Whitman demonstrate.<sup>402</sup>

---

<sup>402</sup> From Walter Grunzweig’s article “Whitman in German-Speaking Countries“, from The Walt Whitman Archive, discussed in the “Walt Whitman: Reception & Translation” chapter of this dissertation: “While Freiligrath’s essay broke ground for Whitman in Germany, it hardly did justice to the essential modernity of the American’s works. Freiligrath’s selection of poems, mainly from Whitman’s Civil War poetry in *Drum-Taps*, reveals that he appreciated Whitman more for his political and social ideas than for his aesthetic program. What Whitman expressed was more important to Freiligrath than the mode of expression, although Whitman’s poetry clearly raised aesthetic questions for him as well: “Has the age so much and such serious matter to say, that the old vessels no longer suffice for the new contents? Are we standing before a poetry of the ages to come, just as some years ago a music of the ages to

At the same time, Montoliu was well aware he was introducing Whitman in an unprecedented way and his *Leaves of Grass* to the Catalan-speaking world. He was “pioneering”, once again, in fact, bringing another English-language writer to his birth nation, who was busy itself cutting new ground in terms of its identity and future. Montoliu would even take the time to write, as he had for his other translations, an introduction to his Catalan offering *Leaves of Grass*, that, in this case, would develop into a book-length study of both the author, his times and his work. I believe his choice, then, of which poems to translate were influenced both by personal and political preference as well as a keen sense of cultural responsibility.

First of all, we have, as is unfortunately often the case for this Montoliu, no document in which he explains his criteria for his choice, let alone why there are twenty-three poems translated, and not two, not ten, not the complete work. Within the context of this group of poems, however, we can attest to the “overview” of Whitman’s work they could have provided to the uninitiated. Among the list, there are representatives from groupings of poems and their delineations in the 1891-92 edition from which he was working, as opposed to the cascade of words and lines that are present in, for example, the 1855 edition: “Inscriptions”, “Fills d’Adam”, “Calamus”, “Birds of Passage”, “Drum-Taps”, “Sea-Drift”, “Autumn Rivulets”, “Whispers of Heavenly Death”, and “From Noon to Starry Night”.<sup>403</sup>

---

come was announced to us? And is Walt Whitman greater than Richard Wagner?” Accessed January 2017. <http://whitmanarchive.org/published/foreign/german/introduction.html>.

<sup>403</sup> Montoliu includes six poems from “Inscriptions” section of the work: “Un Mateix Jo Canto” (“Song of Myself”), “En els Vaixells Pel Mar” (“In Cabin’d Ships at Sea”), “A les Terres Foranes” (“To Foreign Lands”), “A un Historiador” (“To a Historian”), “Idols” (“Eidólons”) and “En Llegint el Llibre” (When I Read the Book); two from “Fills d’Adam”, “Jo Canto-l Cos Electric” (“I Sing the Body Electric”, “Una Dòna M’espera” (“A Woman Waits for Me”); one from “Calamus”: “Flairos Herbei del Meu Cor” (“Scented Herbage of my Breast”); “Cant de la Via Lliure” (“Song of the Open Road”); “Cant de la Estrel” (fragments) (“Song of the Broad-Axe”); “Cant de L’exposició” (Inspirat en l’Exposició internacional que en 1853 celebrà New-York al *Crystal Palace*) (“Song of the Exposition”); “Un Cant de la Rodant Terra”, (“A Song of the Rolling Earth”); one from “Birds of Passage”: “A Tu” (“To You”); one from “Sea-Drift”, “Llagrimes”, (“Tears”); two from “Drum-Taps”: “Ciutat de Naus”, (“City of Ships”), “Doneu-me l’Esplendid Sol Silenciós!” (“Give me the Splendid, Silent Sun”); two from “Autumn Rivulets”: “Miracles” (“Miracles”), “Què sóc jo al Cap D’avall?” (“What am I, After All?”); one from “Whispers of Heavenly Death”, “Oh Viure Sempre, Sempre Morir” (“O Living, Always Dying”), and three from “From Noon to Starry Night”: “El Mistic Trompeter” (“The Mystic Trumpeter”), “Tot es Veritat” (“All is Truth”), and, to conclude the collection, “Per la Riba de l’ample Potomac” (“By Broad Potomac’s Shore”).



Despite the fact that commentary by Montoliu on his choice and the actual poems is scarce, there is some information to be gathered first of all, via the introductions he wrote to accompany his translations, on what he might think about translation in general and how he might specifically approach it; and secondly, following along his arguments in *L'home i sa tasca*, we can also surmise his interest in or appreciation of a poem, either generally or as representative of a particular aspect of Whitman's poetry that Montoliu would like to share, if not emphasize.

Below are five poems from Montoliu's translation, not all in their complete forms, for concerns of length. They are, from "Inscriptions", "Idols" ("Eidólons"); from "Fills d'Adam", "Jo Canto-l Cos Electric" ("I Sing the Body Electric"); "Cant de L'exposició" (Inspirat en l'Exposició internacional que en 1853 celebrà New-York al *Crystal Palace*) ("Song of the Exposition"); from "From Noon to Starry Night", "Tot es Veritat" ("All is Truth"), and also from "From Noon to Starry Night" "Per la Riba de l'ample Potomac" ("By Broad Potomac's Shore").<sup>404</sup> If I am proposing some of the personal and political propensities that would have Montoliu, the translator, choose the twenty-three poems he did, as opposed to others, I, in turn, have chosen the five poems here not for literary analysis, but because they represent for me an overview of his selection.

Montoliu footnotes the title of this poem to point that Whitman entitled this poem with the original Greek word, and thus that we should keep in mind the root meanings of "image" and "form", as Montoliu says, "en el primitiu sentit grec de la paraula".<sup>405</sup> The period in which Montoliu lived was imbued – could we say, using one of Whitman's key words, and Montoliu's as well, when he speaks of Whitman, *absorbed* in and by - as we have seen, by noucentisme,

---

<sup>404</sup> For easier access to Montoliu's complete translation of the poems from *Leaves of Grass*, easier than reading from a fragile original edition, please go to the treasure of a website: <http://www.traduccionliteraria.org>.

<sup>405</sup> Whitman, Walt. *Fulles d'Herba*, introduction. Translated by Cebrià Montoliu. (Barcelona: Tip., L'Avenç, 1909), 18.

whose tenets affected all aspects of art and politics, included a harkening back to the Classic Greece and its ideals (idols?) of the *polis*. Montoliu was part of this, as were his potential readers and brings classical references into his discussions of Whitman's poems. For example, in the section "Prehistoria interna. – Natura i homes", speaking to Whitman's profound influences, be they literary or from nature, Montoliu writes:

*La "Iliada" la vaig llegir per primera vegada al fons d'un abrigat cau de roques i sorra, amb la mar a cada vora. Meravella 'm semblava mes tard com no m'havia anorreat l'influencia de aquest [mestre poderos].*<sup>406</sup>

"Idols" is a poem that has a distant, "knowing voice, akin to a Greek chorus in a Greek play, just as it contains repetition of the word "idol", like an incantation, or an oracle from Delphi.

Despite the fact that Whitman would say of the discussion he had with Emerson regarding the "Fills d'Adam" section of *Leaves of Grass*, that is was "més preciosa que l'or fou per a mi la disertació", he would, paradoxically even for himself, not change a word of the section containing direct words and images of male and female sexual relationships. Montoliu quotes this poem alongside "A Woman Waits for Me", from the same section.<sup>407</sup> Montoliu does not shy away from the question of sex and sexuality in his writings on Whitman – in fact, there are many discussions in his study (not least of which is his appendix on these questions) on the utmost importance of the body and sex for Whitman's poetry – and here, he emphasizes the egalitarian approach Whitman uses in talking about sex. Whitman does not talk in the (male) generic, and these passages are a case in point. Montoliu also has stressed in his study the importance of things spiritual for Whitman, and, moreover, the tie-in between the material and spiritual, like, by the way, the Greek culture. Indeed, this one line of Whitman's brings this all together – women, body, spirit - in this electrical current: "Vosaltres sou la porta del còs, i vosaltres sou la porta de l'ànima".

---

<sup>406</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L'home i sa tasca*. (Barcelona: Tip., L'Avenç, 1913), 26.

<sup>407</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L'home i sa tasca*. (Barcelona: Tip., L'Avenç, 1913), 118.

Montoliu shows his adoration for the technological side of life in choosing to translate the poem “Cant de L’exposició”. In fact, his enthusiasm for the inventions of the world – and for their inventors - can remind one of the Greek chorus in Sophocles’ Antigone putting forth:

*Numberless wonders terrible wonders walk the world but none the match for man -- that great wonder crossing the heaving gray sea.*<sup>408</sup>

Montoliu would have been just about fifteen years old, a student at San Ignacio in Manresa, when Barcelona hosted its first world fair, the 1888 Barcelona Universal Exposition. The fair was in town from May to December of that year and we can suppose that Montoliu attended the fair – with his father, interested in civic affairs, as we have seen, or with his friends from high school. Even if one was not interested, how could such a huge and long-lasting event be avoided? Montoliu would, moreover, go on in life with a sustained interest in development writ large, including technological - as long as the human being was not left behind in the excitement. He even makes a point in his translation of “Song of the Exposition” to note that Whitman was inspired to write it in the wake of the 1853 World Fair in New York.

“Tot és Veritat” (“All is Truth”), from the section “From Noon to Starry Night”, speaks, I believe, to both Whitman’s and Montoliu’s consciousness of and longing for, expressed through Whitman in Montoliu’s case, of the spiritual world. In Montoliu’s opinion, if Whitman had to choose, the spiritual idol of the world is the human being, but that is also because, for Whitman, “tot és diví”.<sup>409</sup> And it is in this poem that we see Whitman expressing in human terms, the guiding principle of all life, the ineffable divine. Montoliu’s discussion of the poem’s content, several pages long, with a partial citing of the poem, indicates how Montoliu felt this poem to be representative of Whitman’s life and work:

---

<sup>408</sup> Sophocles. Antigone. wsu.edu. Accessed April 2016. [http://public.wsu.edu/~hughesc/ode\\_to\\_man.htm](http://public.wsu.edu/~hughesc/ode_to_man.htm).

<sup>409</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L’home i sa tasca*. (Barcelona: Tip., L’Avenç, 1913), 103-4.

*És aquesta la veritat profunda de totes les coses, ont se troben totes llurs divergències, i que li inspirà la excelsa poesia «Tot és veritat », lo que constitueix el nervi central del séu místic apostolat en cerca i en defensa d'una fórmula cada cop més alta, més fonda i més vasta per a la seva religió « més gran » i el séu « culte nou » ell les anomena.<sup>410</sup>*

Nature and the natural world, were of course, a source of life and writing inspiration for Whitman. He wrote many poems celebrating the natural world and “Per la Riba de l’ample Potomac” (“By Broad Potomac’s Shore”), is one of them, the natural world, being of course, sensual. This is a lovely poem depicting the shore of the broad Potomac river and its flowing waters, like the poet’s old tongue: “...(Still uttering, still ejaculating, canst never cease this babble?)”. But how can he help himself? Spring is returning and the Virginia’s summer sky is blue and silver over the purple hills and the poet would like to pay tribute. One can forget in the flurry that is Whitman’s work and the variety subjects he addresses, that he also wrote lyrical poems that had little political bent or lists or even his infamous long line and “By Broad Potomac’s Shore” is here to enchant us and remind us of that fact.

On nature and Whitman, among many things, Montoliu presents Whitman as a man at home in nature, if not an example of Nature itself, and, recounting his travels remarks that Whitman was “sempre impulsat per sa passió deambulatoria”. I would add that this passion existed, whether the “walks about” were in town, country, in conversation with friends or in Whitman’s imagination. I would also say that Montoliu had a similar passion and that it was part passion, part curiosity that would eventually bring this translator of Whitman to the US to see for himself the land and people Whitman spent his life depicting.

This poem thus brings in the lyric, the great outdoors and a moment of communion with it, just as it brings us full circle in terms of *Leaves of Grass*, which starts with soil and growth, and, in (deathless) death as well, ends there:

*...perfume this book of mine O red-blood roses!  
lave subtly with your waters every line Potomac!  
Give me of you O spring, before I close, to put between its pages  
O forenoon purple of the hills, before I close, of you!  
O deathless grass, of you!*

## IDOLS <sup>1</sup>

Trobé un vident,  
Que passava 'ls tints i objectes d'aquest món,  
Els camps de Ciència i Art, plaers i senys,  
Espigolant idols.

Posa en els teus cants, digué,  
Ja no l'enigma de l'hora o del dia, ni segments ni  
parts d'ells posis,  
Posa-hi primer abans tot, com llum per tots i  
preludi per tots,  
El cant dels idols.

Sempre 'l fosc començar,  
Sempre 'l créixer, l'enronament del cercle,  
Sempre 'l cim i l'absorpció final (certament per a  
partir altre cop),  
Idols! Idols!

Sempre lo mudable,

---

1) Del mateix aplec que abans. *Eidolons* en l'original, això es, «imatges», «formes», en el primitiu sentit grec de la paraula.

Sempre materials que muden, s'esfondren i  
reintegren,  
Sempre els obradors, les fàbriques divines,  
Produint idols.

Mira, tu o jo,  
Sigui dòna, home, o estat conegut o inconegut,  
De sòlida riquesa, força o bellesa que semblen  
fets,  
Som fets realment idols.

El fugitiu ostent,  
La substància de l'estre d'un artista o dels llargs  
estudis d'un savi,  
O dels afanys del guerrer, del martir o de l'heroe,  
Es d'emmotilar el seu idol.

De tota humana vida  
(Les unitats plegades, fixades, ni un pensament,  
ni una emoció, ni un acte omesos),  
El tot, gran o petit, sumat, afegit,  
En el seu idol.

La vella, vella pruija,  
Basada en vells pinacles, mireu, nous i més alts  
pinacles,  
Per la ciència i l'esperit modern encara alçats,  
La vella, vella pruija: idols.

El present ara i aquí,  
L'afanyós, pletoric, intrincat terbolí d'America.  
D'agregacions i segregacions, tant sols per des-  
lliurar,  
Els idols d'avui.

Això amb el passat,

[Idols...].

## JO CANTO ·L COS ELECTRIC 1

1

Jo canto ·l cos electric,  
Les tropes dels que jo estimo m'abracen i jo ·ls  
abraço,  
No ·m volen deixar anar fins que me'n vagi amb  
ells i els correspongui,  
I els descorrompi, i els carregui curulls de la  
carga de l'ànima.

Algú dubtava si aquells que corrompen llurs  
cossos s'amaguen?  
I si aquells que profanen els vius no són tant  
dolents com els que profanen els morts?  
I si ·l cos no fa totalment tant com l'ànima?  
I si ·l cos no es pas l'ànima, què es l'ànima?

2

L'amor del cos de l'home o de la dona es inefa-  
ble, el cos mateix es inefable,

1) De l'aplec titulat *Fills d'Adam*.



El del mascle es perfet, i el de la femella es  
perfet.

L'expressió de la cara es inefable,  
Més l'expressió d'un home ben fet no apar sola-  
ment en sa cara,

Es també en sos membres i llorics, es curiosa-  
ment en els llorics de ses anques i punys,

*[Jo Canto' Cos Electric...].*

## CANT DE L'EXPOSICIÓ <sup>1</sup>

1

(Ah, poc pensa 'l treballador  
Quan aprop sa feina 'l té de Déu,  
L'amorós treballador a través de temps i espai.)

Al cap d'avall no solament crear ni solament  
fundar,  
Ans tal vegada dur de lluny lo que ja es fundat,  
Per donar-li la nostra identitat, mitjana, ilimitada,  
lliure,  
Per omplir la massa bruta i torpida amb vital  
foc religiós,  
No tant repulsar i destruir com acceptar, fondre,  
rehabilitar,  
Obeir tant com manar, seguir més que guiar,  
També són aquestes les lliçons del nostre Nou  
Món;  
Per més que quant poc del Nou, ben mirat, i  
quant molt del Vell, Vell Món!

Per temps i temps ha crescut l'herba,

1) Inspirat en l'Exposició internacional que en 1853 celebrà New-York al *Crystal Palace*.

Per temps i temps ha plogut l'aigua,  
Per temps i temps que roda 'l món.

2

Vine, Musa, emigra de Grecia i Jonia,  
Esborra, t'ho prego, aquests contes amb im-  
mens escriu pagats,  
Aquelles faules de Troia i la rabia d'Achileu, i  
els vagabondatges d'Odisseus i Enees,  
Posa «Se traspassa» i «Per llogar» en les roques  
del teu nevat Parnas,  
Altre tant a Jerusalem, fixa l'anunci damunt la  
porta de Jafa i sobre 'l mont Moriah,  
Mateix que en els murs dels teus castells de Ger-  
mania, França i Espanya, i en els museus  
d'Italia,  
Car sapigues que una esfera més bona, més  
fresca, més activa, un ampla, inexplorat reial-  
me t'espera i demana.

3

A nostra invocació amatent,  
O més bé a sa inclinació llarg temps nodrida,  
Junt amb una irresistible i natural gravitació,  
Ella ve! Jo sento 'l refrec de sa tunica,  
Oloro la flaire deliciosa del seu alè,  
Remarco 'l seu pas diví, la viva girada dels  
seus ulls curiosos,  
Vers aquesta matcixa escena.

La dama de les dames! més, qui ho creuria,  
Aquells antics temples i classiques estatués, no  
ha pogut cap d'ells retenir-la?  
Ni les ombres de Virgili i Dant, ni milers de

*[Cant de l'Exposici...].*

## TOT ES VERITAT<sup>1</sup>

Ai de mi, home de flonja fe tant temps!  
Restant apart, negant particulars tant temps!  
Sols adonat avui de la veritat compacta, arreu  
difosa,  
Avui descobrint que no hi ha mentida o forma  
de mentida, i que no pot haver-n'hi, ans so-  
breix tant fatalment de sí mateixa, com fa la  
veritat de sí mateixa,  
O com fa qualsevol llei de la terra o qualsevol  
natural producte de la terra.

(Això es curiós i pot no ser immediatament  
capit, però ha de ser capit,  
Jo sento en mi mateix que represento falsetats  
igualmente que altra cosa,  
I que altre tant fa l'univers.)

Aont ha mancat un perfet retorn indiferent de  
veritat o de mentida?  
Serà damunt la terra, o en l'aigua, o en el foc? o  
en l'esperit de l'home? o bé en la carn i sang?

1) Del mateix aplec d'abans.

Meditant entre mentiders i retirant-me austera-  
ment dins mi mateix, jo veig que després de  
tot no hi ha realment mentiders ni mentides,  
I que a res manca son perfet retorn, i que lo  
que'n diuen mentides són perfets retorns,  
I que cada cosa's representa exactament ella  
mateixa i lo que l'ha precedit,  
I que la veritat tot ho enclou. i es compacta,  
tant justament compacta com l'espai,  
I que no hi ha buit ni esquerra en el total de  
veritat — ans que tot es veritat sense excep-  
ció;  
I desiera jo aniré celebrant qualsevol cosa que jo  
vegi o sigui,  
I cantant i rient i res negant.

## PER LA RIBA DE L'AMPLE POTOMAC<sup>1</sup>

Per la riba de l'ample Potomac, altre cop, oh  
vella llengua!

(Sempre expressant, sempre exclamant, quan  
cesaras ta garla?)

Altre cop, vell cor, tant gai, altre cop a tu, al teu  
seny, el ple doll primaverat retorna,

Altre cop la frescor i les sentors, altre cop de  
Virginia i el cel estival, cerulic blau i argent,

Altre cop la porpra matinal de les montanyes,

Altre cop l'herba immortal, tant quietament  
suau i verda,

Altre cop les roses florint sanguines.

Perfumeu-eix mon llibre, oh roses sanguines!  
Renta sotilment, amb tes aigues, totes les línies,  
Potomac!

Dóna-m de tu, oh primavera, abans no 'l clogui,  
per a posar entre ses planes!

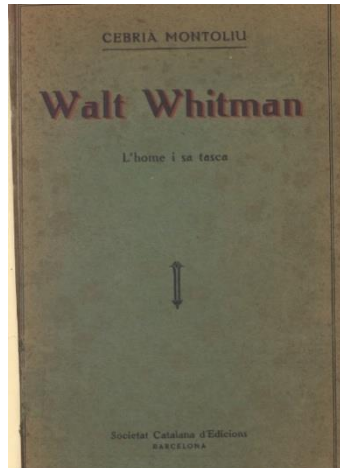
Oh, porpra matinal de les montanyes, dóna-m de  
tu, abans no 'l clogui!

Oh, i de tu, herba immortal!

1) Del mateix aplec d'abans.

## 3.2 Cebrià Montoliu: Work on Whitman

### 3.2.2 The Study: *Walt Whitman: L'home i sa tasca*



#### 3.2.2.1 The Man

Cebrià Montoliu's essay on Walt Whitman, *L'home i sa tasca* (1913), is an in-depth study of the man, and mostly his work, with the latter, as if we could separate the two, being more of Montoliu's focus. That is to say, it stands quite on its own in contrast to the myriad of "personality" essays written on Whitman from the later 1900's onwards such as the Englishman Dr. J. Johnston's account of his visit to Whitman in 1890<sup>411</sup> and, in the 20<sup>th</sup> c., *Walt Whitman: An American* by Henry Seidel Canby (1943).<sup>412</sup> Montoliu thanks and complements in the very first

---

<sup>411</sup> Dr. Johnston arrived at Whitman's door in July 1890, and, with a letter of introduction from Mr. Andrew H. Rome of Brooklyn (the (usually) legal documents-based printer who allowed Whitman to come to this print shop and create his first edition of *Leaves of Grass*) was ushered in by Frederick Warren Fritzynger, Whitman's nurse, and greeted by an Annie Dent, a girl who said she was "cleaning Mr. Whitman's wheeled chair", as well as by Mrs. Mary O'Davis, Whitman's housekeeper. [www.babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=chi.088084779;view=1up;seq=5](http://www.babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=chi.088084779;view=1up;seq=5) March 25, 2017. "Notes of visit to Walt Whitman, etc. in July 1890". Bolton T. Brimelow & Co., Printers. 1890.

<sup>412</sup> Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.

sentence of his introduction to his own essay Léon Bazalgette, the first French translator who translated the complete *Leaves of Grass*, published in 1908, and who remained a great promoter of the Brooklyn poet throughout his life, but whose *Walt Whitman: l'homme et son œuvre* (1909) could be included in this more “pop” essay category. In it, the reader finds descriptions of is often invited to imagine, for example, Whitman’s imagined facial expressions in such or such a situation and the like couching historical fact, was later complemented by Bazalgette’s 1921 book-length and poetry-focused essay, *Le Poème-Évangile de Walt Whitman*.<sup>413</sup>

Montoliu divides his essay into two major parts, the Persona and the Work, which are then both sub-divided. A copy of the table of context of the book-length essay is included here as Appendix, but, for example, includes chapters in the Persona section such as “Prehistory, external”, “Prehistory, internal”, “The Vocation” and “The mystery of pain – Nature and travels”. The Work section includes discussion on Whitman thought, ethics, politics, *ars poetica*, and the ripple effect of his work since 1855. Montoliu also has a two-part appendix, one for his opinions on Whitman’s metrics and one on “*la qüestió sexual*” – a subject that was only beginning to be discussed more directly by writers outside the English or German gay communities. Montoliu, true to his librarian and researcher propensities, also includes a generous bibliography, also in the appendices of this dissertation.

Taking all of this into consideration, it is no wonder then, that, as Montoliu explains in the introduction to his translation of Whitman’s poetry, *Fulles d’Herba* (1909), that, as he found his introduction quickly becoming enthusiastically unruly, he realized the need to create a separate home for his thoughts on Whitman. Two excerpts of this essay were published, Montoliu goes on

---

<sup>413</sup> Whitman futur, ou l'avenir à venir: "Poets to Come" in French Translation. Éric Athenot and Blake Bronson-Bartlett. Written for the *Walt Whitman Archive*. First published on the *Archive* in 2012. Whitman Archive ID: 02025. <http://whitmanarchive.org/published/foreign/poets/french/intro.html>



to say, in *La Lectura: una revista de ciencias y arte*, in the August and September 1911 editions of this publication.<sup>414</sup> A magazine published in Madrid, *La Lectura* included an eclectic mix of work from around the world, including Spanish-language authors from Latin America, celebrated Basque and Catalan authors such as Miguel Unamuno and Joan Maragall, as well as translations from non-Iberic languages. In an edition from that year, for example, there is the translation from the French of “La Vagabondo” by Colette Willy.<sup>415</sup>

Montoliu, like his predecessors, and as many who would follow would do, puts forth that Whitman is “el poeta de la personalitat, tal es la seva nota caracteristic.”<sup>416</sup> However, Montoliu does not stop there. Here, as in the remainder of his essay, he is often very specific about why he believes what he does about Whitman and/or his work. He is not simply parroting received ideas, but nor he will not shy away from using some as a platform or as *un punto de partido*.

Take, for instance, this question of “personality.” On this subject, Montoliu states:

*No's tracta pas aqui d'una personalitat despresa del medi ambient, d'un de tants narcisismes lirics com l'història del nostre romanticisme literari a cada pas ens mostra ; sino, tot lo contrari, d'un personalitat representativa, universal, -- « Walt Whitman, un Cosmos » segons ell mateix se nomena en al « Cant de mi mateix », aquest nucli central i genuïnament representatiu de tota la seva obra, així com aquesta prete esser-ho de l'humanitat contemporània.*<sup>417</sup>

---

<sup>414</sup> Montoliu, Cipriano. *L'home i sa tasca*. (Societat Catalana d'Edicions, Barcelona, 1913), 6 *La Lectura: una revista de ciencias y arte*, August and September 1911. Madrid. Director: Francisco Acebal, Administrador Propietario : C. de Velasco. calle Cervantes, 30. Only the September edition was found at all, digitalized, in the Biblioteca Nacional de España. However, the title was “Walt Whitman” then, on the next line “(Continuació.)”, 33-58.

<sup>415</sup> *La Lectura: una revista de ciencia y arte*. Madrid, Director: Francisco Acebal, Administrador Propietario: C. de Velasco. calle Cervantes, 30, Jan-April, 1911, September, 1911.

<sup>416</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià . *L'home I sa tasca*. (Societat Catalana d'Edicions, Barcelona.1913), 15.

<sup>417</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 15.

For Montoliu, Whitman is not simply the articulate voice of humanity, “according to the profound Carlylian definition of the true poet”<sup>418</sup> but the actual, integrated incarnation of his country, and for this reason, deserves to be called the national poet of the United States, and is so on the Personality, Nationality and Universal levels. For the Catalan translator, Whitman became a fusion of these three spiritual modalities and realized, in an absolute manner, this symbiosis of his work, his persona, his country and the universe. Furthermore, the poet was able to express this state of being through his vibrant poetry:

Camarada, això, no es un llibre,  
Qui això toca, toca a un hime...  
Soc jo que tu agafes i qui t’afaga,  
Jo salto d’aquests planes cap als teus braços...  
Volgut amic, qualsevol que tu siguis, pren aquest bes.<sup>419</sup>

### Influences, Family and Friends

There have been so many biographical accounts of Whitman, including my own above, so I will not spend an inordinate amount of time reiterating what Montoliu had to say on the topic. He does, as others do, stress the importance of Whitman’s mother for the poet, both as a physical and ethical presence.<sup>420</sup> Montoliu believes that the fact that Whitman came from a long line of Quakers had opened him up to the *spiritual*, although, as we know from his biography and his poetry, he did not consider himself of any one *religion* as an adult. In fact, quite the opposite: “...And nothing, not God, is greater to one than one's-self is...”<sup>421</sup> Montoliu does believe that exposure to this belief system – and Whitman’s being surrounded by others who beliefs ran along similar lines, such as Elias Hicks, the abolitionist – is the fountain from which, in large

---

<sup>418</sup> Montoliu, *L’home i sa tasca*, 16.

<sup>419</sup> Montoliu, *L’home i sa tasca*, 16.

<sup>420</sup> Montoliu, *L’home i sa tasca*, 19.

<sup>421</sup> Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass*, 1855 edition, p53 on [www.whitmanarchive.org](http://www.whitmanarchive.org)’s organization of the text.

part, flowed Whitman's liberal and humanitarian ideas, as well as his mystic and often extravagantly expressive tendencies.<sup>422</sup>

Montoliu also, of course, speaks to Whitman and the streets of New York, the people and bustle of the city, its theatres, watching it all pass by on the city buses:

*Fill del poble, d'aquella potentia classe mitjana, que era i és encara el nervi central de la jove nació nordamericana, allí, sumit en muda contemplació, devia el nostre hèroe absorbir-la genial inspiració que havia convertir-lo en el genuí poeta de la democràcia moderna, en el genial cantor de l'home mitjà ».*<sup>423</sup>

And Montoliu lets Whitman, in true democratic fashion, speak for himself:

*En primer lloc estudià la vida, els homes, les dones i els nens; va anar amb ells en un peu de igualtat...després...les botigues, de las cases, dels bots que travessen el riu...<sup>424</sup>.  
...també conegué...íntimament, els homes de fortuna i de cultura, i tant perfectament com els més pobres i les més ignorants...<sup>425</sup>*

Among those friends: Horace Traubel, Anne Gilchrist, Herbert Gilchrist, Richard Maurice Bucke, Mary O'Davis, William Douglas O'Connor, John Burroughs, Fred Vaughn, Peter Doyle, Frederick Warren Fritzingler, the Stafford family...

### Influences, Literary

Despite the "anxiety of influence",<sup>426</sup> we all have our influences and Montoliu speaks to some of Whitman's. He describes the important moment of national consolidation that the United States was in the midst of, even while, later than this time referenced, it would tear itself apart. For Montoliu, Ralph Waldo Emerson was the man of the moment, and no one could escape his influence. Emerson, "the Concord philosopher"<sup>427</sup> was known, as a writer of essays who had

---

<sup>422</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L'home i sa tasca*. (Societat Catalana d'Edicions, Barcelona.1913). 20.

<sup>423</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 28.

<sup>424</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 29.

<sup>425</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 30.

<sup>426</sup> Bloom, Harold. *The Anxiety of Influence*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

<sup>427</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 40.

them regularly published, often with one of his poems, in magazines such as Margaret Fuller's The Dial, Theodor Parker, the "modern Luther" and his The Massachusetts Quarterly, and The Atlantic. An educated person of his era, he wrote letters and also gave lectures, including public lectures as he addressed people from all classes - not unlike Montoliu and his lectures to the workers of Barcelona of the day.<sup>428</sup>

Montoliu was he himself an admirer of Emerson and his entourage, whose key members were, again, Margaret Fuller and Theodor Parker, and Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, of course, and – here is Montoliu already talking about Whitman in the introduction to his 1904 translation of Emerson – “el grandió cantor de la democracia, el famós poeta nacional Walt Whitman”.<sup>429</sup> By the time Montoliu was writing this essay on Whitman's persona and work, he had already translated the essays “Self-Reliance” and “Friendship”, first published together in 1904, as mentioned, by the Biblioteca Popular de l'Avenç.<sup>430</sup> For Montoliu, it was also with Emerson's founding of the Transcendentalist Club of North America that his ideas were disseminated and thus, were a “powerful contributor” to North American idealism, from political activism to, for example, the individual-focused utopia of the 1840's, Brook Farm.<sup>431</sup>

If I am spending time contextualizing the influence of Emerson, it is also to propose some reasons why Montoliu would have been interested in translating both Emerson and Whitman. Throughout this essay on Whitman – as in the introduction to his translations of Emerson, we see Montoliu emphasizing very similar qualities. Montoliu states that of all of Emerson's essays, he

---

<sup>428</sup> Montoliu, Cipriano y de Togores, Marqués de Montolíu. Institucions de cultura social : conferencies donades al Institut Obrer Català. (Barcelona : L'Avenç, 1903).

<sup>429</sup> Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *La Confianca en si mateix / l'Amistat*, Translated by Cebrià Montoliu. (Barcelona: Biblioteca Popular de l'Avenç, 1904), 18.

<sup>430</sup> [www.Abebooks.com](http://www.Abebooks.com) (Mar1.2017). I used the second edition, by the same publisher (1910) in my research.

<sup>431</sup> Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *La Confianca en si mateix / l'Amistat*, traducció by Cebrià Montoliu. (Barcelona : Biblioteca Popular de l'Avenç, 1904), 18-19.

chose these two as the best examples of “Emersonian” writing, those which bring to light in the most frank and fortuitous way, Emerson’s personality.<sup>432</sup> He also believes that it is in these particular essays that his spirit – and perhaps priorities – shine: that is, his absolute and radical individualism, and the feral independence of his North American animus.<sup>433</sup> Speaking to the “democratic spirit” he finds here, Montoliu writes:

*...democracy, so misunderstood by other peoples, does not represent here a negation or diminishing of the individual, but, to the contrary, his exaltation to the highest degree of sovereign independence.*<sup>434</sup>

Interesting, too, for the ideas expressed within this essay - which we also note in Montoliu’s essay on Whitman - on the English language. Montoliu, already the translator at this juncture of two works of Ruskin,<sup>435</sup> who would go on to translate Shakespeare and Whitman. Apparently, on top of his admiration for Anglo-Saxon cultures, Montoliu had a deep appreciation for the English language.<sup>436</sup> He points out Emerson’s “natural” (linguistic) concision and the challenge it poses for a translator<sup>437</sup>, then goes onto to discuss in more general terms the English language and its “més subtils refinaments”.<sup>438</sup> Circling back for a moment to Ruskin, and this appreciation of the English language that Montoliu has developed somewhere along the way, Montoliu writes in the introduction to his translation, *Nature*, of Ruskin’s mastery of the language, and furthermore that:

---

<sup>432</sup> Emerson, *La Confianca en si mateix / l’Amistat*, 22.

<sup>433</sup> Emerson, *La Confianca en si mateix / l’Amistat*, 23.

<sup>434</sup> Emerson, *La Confianca en si mateix / l’Amistat*, 23.

<sup>435</sup> Ruskin, John. *Fragments and Nature*. To note: his epigraph to nature is by Emerson p. vii.

<sup>436</sup> It is surprising that Montoliu did not translate Thomas Carlyle, the Scottish historian and essayist and one of the most important social commentators of his time, who Montoliu admired and references often.

<sup>437</sup> Emerson, *La Confianca en si mateix / l’Amistat*, 25-26.

<sup>438</sup> Emerson, *La Confianca en si mateix / l’Amistat*, 27.

*Caldria parlar una llengua tan subtil y elaborada com la inglesa, y manejarla ab el lliure domini d'un Verdaguer, pera rendre dignament tals maravellas literaris, unicas potser en el mon, y sense disputa en la llengua inglesa. Lluny de mi tals pretensions...*<sup>439</sup>

Influence, Public Events: The 1853 Universal Exposition, New York City, Crystal Palace

For Montoliu, the 1853 Universal Exposition, which took place in New York City, served to crystallize the ideas that, up until that point, Whitman had been more “fluidly” considering and it is here that Whitman found like-mindedness in the marveling at the imagination and inventions of the human mind, and of the excitement about wondrous and new ideas coming to physical fruition - and invested with hopes to be of service to humankind.<sup>440</sup> Whitman was thirty-five when the exposition was in town, two years before Whitman would publish the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* where, of course, Whitman also would write “Song of the Exposition”. In Montoliu’s opinion, the exposition confirmed for Whitman:

*...la intima i creixent convicció que diria formar el nucli central de sa espiritual existencia: la augusta fraternitat de tots els pobles davant del comú altarde la ciencia i de la llibertat...*<sup>441</sup>

This is one of the twenty-three poems that Montoliu chose to translate, “Cant de l’Exposició”.<sup>442</sup>

We know Montoliu was an *urbanista*, formally trained in law, but adept at city planning issues. We also know he was a documentalist, someone who, according to Francesc Roca, always wanted his information first-hand.<sup>443</sup> Montoliu was the first person to hold what would later be considered the position, and enact the work of, a librarian, the first school for which would not open until 1915. We can also observe Montoliu’s meticulousness in his reading and research for most of his translations are accompanied by a bibliography. It was atypical at that time to

---

<sup>439</sup> Ruskin, John. *Natura*. Traduhits del inglés y ordenats per Cebrià Montoliu. (Barcelona : Publicació Joventut, , 1903), x.

<sup>440</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià . *L’home i sa tasca*. (Barcelona : Societat Catalana d’Edicions, 1913), 41.

<sup>441</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià . *L’home i sa tasca*. (Barcelona : Societat Catalana d’Edicions, 1913), 42.

<sup>442</sup> Whitman, Walt. *Fulles d’herba*. Selecció i Traducció per Cebrià Montoliu. (Barcelona: L’Avenç, 1910), 60-73.

<sup>443</sup> Roca, Francesc. *Cebrià Montoliu (1873-1923)*, a cura de Francesc Roca. Col·lecció Gent de la Casa 7. 1993. Nota introductòria.

provide the reader with a bibliography as an accompaniment to one's translation. Was the predominant idea - or hope - to convince the reader that all this knowledge had just sprouted from the head of the writer or translator in question? A fear of sharing credit, appearing (only) human? Montoliu could be considered too modest to the point of self-effacement, or, the "invisible man of modern Catalan culture"<sup>444</sup> but he was also generous of spirit, wanting to *share* information, and a forerunner to the admission, more accepted in our century, that no man, woman, scholar, and/or artist is her or his own font of knowledge.

Montoliu was also, like Whitman, fascinated by this own times and the developments taking place therein. Not only was he fascinated, he wanted to partake in them, to do his part to guide, for example, the booming cityscape into a form that faithfully kept the human being and her needs in mind. He thought about questions of modern schooling - for all classes - hygiene in the increasingly polluted city, his city gardens integrated into what would otherwise become, to coin a phrase, a concrete jungle. Montoliu was working in Barcelona when Dr. Frederick Stark Pearson (1861-1915), with his genius, gumption and Barcelona Traction, Light and Power Company, brought electricity to the city, in the years 1913-1915<sup>445</sup>; he was here when the first Metro line, the current day L6, was established in 1916.<sup>446</sup> When the 1888 Barcelona Universal Exposition came to town, from May to December of that year, who is to say that Montoliu, who would have been fifteen at the time, did not come up from Tarragona with his family, or down from Manresa with his Jesuit high school classmates, to experience the world event "first-hand"?

Montoliu did his research before writing this essay and discusses the "quiet years" preceding the publication of *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman's days and nights at Pfaff's, Whitman and Emerson's

---

<sup>444</sup> Roca, *Cebrià Montoliu (1873-1923)*, a cura de Francesc Roca. Col·lecció Gent de la Casa 7. 1993. Nota introductòria.

<sup>445</sup> Moret, Xavier. *Dr. Pearson: l'home que va portar la llum a Catalunya*. (Barcelona: Columna, 2004).

<sup>446</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barcelona\\_Metro](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barcelona_Metro), March 2, 2017.

walk and dinner together before the third edition was published (1860), his opinion of the poet's "marvelous potential of (his) intuition", his "power of observation" and his prodigious spirituality"<sup>447</sup>, as well as, inevitably, Whitman's charisma:

*...el seus visitants sortie de l'entrevista com il-luminats, incapaços, fins a perdre la són...ningú podia resistir-se a aquesta poderosa corrent simpàtica...El magnetisme de Walt era d'altra naturalesa.*<sup>448</sup>

And later, in the New York Herald (although here, Montoliu does not provide a footnote) – "la seva presencia semblava il-luminar la sala..."<sup>449</sup>

But where other essay writers are content to stay with comments on Whitman's charisma and personality, Montoliu does more, beginning with the Civil War years, of "infinite value" to Whitman<sup>450</sup> and his development during this time, both as the inexhaustible nurse, friend, letter writer, encourager and company in pain and in death to injured soldiers, but also as a poet:

*Aquests quatre anys de guerra, en efecte, malgrat la violenta parèntesi que degueren obrir en sa vida ordinària, lluny d'esmortuir-lo, havien revifat fins al comble el foc de sa inspiració, segons així pot observar-se en la ja citada col·lecció dels seus cants bèl·lics que amb el nom de Drums Taps (Redobles de Tambor) publicà poc després...confirmaren sa fè en l'heroisme i la fortalesa de la seva raça...*<sup>451</sup>

And as a democrat and poet of United States democracy:

*fent inquebrantable sa confiança en aquell poble que, a cop de patriotisme i sacrificis, sapigué salvar incòlumne son ideal democràtic d'aquella tremenda crisi de sa naixent existencia.*<sup>452</sup>

And as "the mystic singer of universal democracy to give us a sketch, the most complete that the world had known up until that moment, of the...Social Poet."<sup>453</sup> Not surprisingly, Montoliu

---

<sup>447</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L'home i sa tasca*. (Barcelona: Societat Catalana d'Edicions 1913), 53.

<sup>448</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 54.

<sup>449</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L'home i sa tasca*. (Barcelona: Societat Catalana d'Edicions 1913), 61.

<sup>450</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 64.

<sup>451</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 64.

<sup>452</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 64-5.

<sup>453</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 54-5.



translated two poems from *Drum-Taps*<sup>454</sup>s, although not the “admirable elegy” for Lincoln<sup>455</sup>, “When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom’d”.

Montoliu reviews this new edition of *Leaves of Grass*, the ensuing Harlan controversy<sup>456</sup> and the fact that this all coincided with his meeting Peter Doyle, his life-long friend, as well as his positive reception in many parts of England (discussed in more detail in the “Reception” section of this dissertation) preceded by and then further fed by the interest of the Pre-Raphaelite William Michael Rossetti who wanted to bring Whitman to the British upper classes and the thus publication of *Poems by Walt Whitman* in 1868 by John Camden Hotten, a controversial publisher who specialized in Americana, erotica, and avant-garde poetry. Wanting to publish the first British edition of Whitman's poetry, but under close scrutiny at the time due to recent new anti-pornography laws, Hotten (and Rossetti) convinced Whitman, faced as he was with this willing but cautious publisher, to compromise on some poems in order to have a wider distribution in England. Montoliu also points out that Whitman’s work was also gaining found elsewhere in Europe, thanks to translations into German, French, Danish and Provençal.<sup>457</sup>

The Catalan translator also touches upon Whitman’s prose in *Democratic Vistas* (1870), where, “amb rudes paraules (Whitman) criticava el present i profetitzava l’avenir de la gran nació

---

<sup>454</sup> “Ciutat de Naus” and “Doneu-me l’esplendí sol silenciós”. *Fulles d’Herba*. (Barcelona: L’Avenç. 1910), 87-91.

<sup>455</sup> Montoliu, *L’home i sa tasca*, 65.

<sup>456</sup> Whereby on June 30, 1865, James Harlan, Secretary of the Interior, (curiously) finds a copy of notes for this edition in Whitman’s desk drawer at work and has him fired. Many came to Whitman’s defense, most famously, his friend William Douglas O’Connor, who published his essay, “The Good Grey Poet: A Vindication” at this time (PUB INFO. This essay is included in the appendices of this dissertation). Thanks to O’Connor, who enlisted the aide of friend, J. Hubley Aston, Whitman was also able to find another post at the Attorney General’s office within twenty-four hours. Joseph P. Hammond observes that this episode, along with O’Connor’s essay, marked the beginning of Harlan’s political decline and an upswing in Whitman’s public stature. Gay Wilson Allen surmises that this incident may have caused Whitman to become less willing to edit any of his work for critics. Hammond, Joseph P., Print Source: J.R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings, eds., *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998). [http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry\\_78.html](http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry_78.html). May 2013.

<sup>457</sup> Montoliu, *L’home i sa tasca*, 72.

nordamericana...<sup>458</sup> before recounting this time of travel for Whitman – New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Kansas, the Rocky Mountains, St. Louis, and his discovering Canada with his friend Maurice Bucke, According to Montoliu, during these travels:

*la seva ànima assedegada d'humanitat sembla àvidament absorbir la confirmació definitiva de sa fè inquebrantable en els destins de sa raça.*<sup>459</sup>

Soon after these road trips, the strokes begin to happen and Whitman is more and more homebound. Homebound, but still working: Whitman produces what will be the definitive form to his poetry with the 1881-82 edition published by James R. Osgood and Company of Boston and the definitive form to his journey that is *Leaves of Grass*, with the 1891-92 “deathbed” edition.

Employing metaphors familiar to him, those of the world of urbanity, the design of architecture transformed by the hands of construction - reminding us, too, that Montoliu was in Barcelona for the beginnings of Antonin Gaudi's *la Sagrada Familia* - he concludes:

*Si per l'observador superficial podia l'edifici en el curs de sa construcció haver semblant estrambòtic, ara que'l conjunt era acabat podia concebir l'idea que ha inspirat a l'arquitecte i que aquest no havia perdut de vista durant tot el procés de sa creació. 25 anys trigà a aquesta obra en construir-se, set etapes ha tingut son desentorllament, i en set diverses empentes han sigut alçades les diverses parts de l'edifici. Però heusaquí que ara's mostra en forma definitiva, inalterable, a la vista del món, i davant d'aquella monumental imatge de sa propia ja fabulosa persona, que's redreça vestida d'immortalitat, bé podia el séu autor preparar tranquilament son comiat. Ara, per fi, podí el vate de Camden entonat el séu « Dimite ».*<sup>460</sup>

Montoliu adds : *aquest gran home que en sa vida i en sa obra tant vivament vinqué a il·luminar la nostra existencia...*<sup>461</sup>

### 3.2.2.2 The Work

#### 3.2.2.2.1 La Pensa Whitmaniana

---

<sup>458</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 73.

<sup>459</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 78.

<sup>460</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 87.

<sup>461</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 89.

Above all, and before embarking on this study of Whitman's work, Montoliu wants to emphasize Whitman for the humanist he was - again, for this researcher, and as discussed in the Montoliu biography section of this dissertation, like Montoliu himself, albeit in a more extroverted manner, Whitman was

*...consagradaa l'ardua i alta tasca d'ésser simplement un home, i d'humanitzar-ho tot pel simple i prodigios encís del séu propi humà contacte...(un)home singular a força d'ésser comú...(i és això)...que és la que constitueix el valor fonamental de sa biografia.*<sup>462</sup>

Montoliu continues:

*Una personalitat vigorosa, vibrant en harmonia amb les corrents còsmiques universals, e imprimint en son llibre la fidel imatge de ses místiques revelacions, - heusaquí en síntesi la fòrmula primoridal, la veritable significació de l'obra de Whitman.*<sup>463</sup>

Now that Montoliu has discussed the personal life of the poet, and before going into a more precise analysis of the work itself, Montoliu delves into the philosophical drive behind the person (choosing the “untranslatable” word<sup>464</sup>), or, Whitman's *Weltanschauung*, as a framework to look at not only Whitman's intellectual development, but – important to Montoliu – “el màgic motlle en què'l poet ha buidat l'augusta esculptura de sa propia ànima”.<sup>465</sup> He titles this section, important to a later discussion, “La Pensa Whitmaniana. – Filosofia i Religió”.

For Montoliu, Whitman is a “pensador pràctic” who systematically rejects formulas of thought<sup>466</sup> (and, it could be easily argued, in day to day life as well). By using this word, “practical”, Montoliu believes Whitman is expressing his national ingenuity and temperament, citing words such as “efficiency”, “americanism”, “pragmatism” and even “pre-pragmatism” when describing

---

<sup>462</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 92.

<sup>463</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 92-93.

<sup>464</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 93.

<sup>465</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 94.

<sup>466</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 95.

how he sees Whitman's *Weltanschauung*.<sup>467</sup> For further demonstration of Whitman's rejection of formula, system and doctrine, there are the words of the poet himself:

*Jo't conjur a rebutjar per a sempre aquells que pretenguin explicar-me, car jo mateix no puc explicar-me.*

*Jo't conjur que cap teoria ni escola deu fundar-se sobre mi,*

*Jo't conjur que tothom deixis lliure, d'igual manera que a tots lliures deixo jo.*<sup>468</sup>

It is only after this citation that for this researcher - also from that « practical » country - discovers what Montoliu is referring to, or, what meaning of practical and pragmatism he has in mind. For instance, how can Montoliu call Whitman “practical” and “efficient” and concurrently emphasize his mystic tendencies? How could someone who wanted to be published be considered “practical” by following so closely his own personal vision, let alone any “vision”? How could such an artist be considered practical when we know that, throughout his life, he almost always held firm to his original vision, despite censure suggestions, requests or threats? How can someone who, on top of it, with no formal education and no connections that may go along with that type of upbringing, enter the literary world by rejecting the very things of that world of his day, this is, artistry, theory, doctrine? Even if we allow for Whitman being more of a planner than he wants us to believe, there is nothing but impracticality in, for example, his emphasis, not on religion, but on spirituality, and nothing but *chutzpah* in his idea to become a poet at all, let alone the poet whose “leaves” would be in the back pocket of each individual making up the “regular guy” masses.

Montoliu continues, revealing that by “practical” he means experiential, of daily experience:

*I tant mateix, si Whitman no formula, i tal vegada perquè no formula, experimenta y creu que tota la seva fè, segons veurem, es a pura dosi d'experiencia.*<sup>469</sup>

---

<sup>467</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 94.

<sup>468</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 95.

Whitman does not “follow” other writers, such as Emerson, Carlyle, and Hegel, per se, Montoliu argues, but rather, “absorbs” them.<sup>470</sup> Montoliu will often choose this verb when speaking of Whitman and his influences – whether literary or political and social. For Montoliu, Whitman’s ties into Germanic culture are clear: “veiem a Whitman...posar-se en contacte amb l’immensa onada del subjectivisme idealista de la filosofia germànica”<sup>471</sup> as is, at the same time, his enthusiasm for “oriental” mysticism and theosophy.<sup>472</sup> But Montoliu recognizes in Whitman his limitless – whether in, for example, his friendships with people of all classes, or in terms of philosophy and language. We know, for example, from Traubel’s daily diary of conversations with Whitman himself and with all his visitors in the last several years of his life, that Whitman considered Tennyson one of “the greats” and that he loved opera. At the same time, we know, as Montoliu points out more than once, that Whitman was a lover of the “*home mitja*”, the average man, in today’s phrasing, “the regular guy”, and integrated city slang and working-class language into his poetry. We know he grew up with the Quaker approach to life and its regular Bible readings, but we see Whitman throughout his adult life examining the *Bhagavat-Gita* and, as we saw in an earlier Whitman citation, always feeling that, in any case, we, all of us, are all a part of G-d or the G-dhead. Whitman, Montoliu is convinced, is, indeed, as he claims, expansive - of body and mind, of “practicability” and, my word, spirituality:

*El séu esperit omnipresent i obert als quatre vents, amb igual facilitat absorbeix les més eteries inspiracions de l'ànima, que les més grolleres concrecions materials del món objectiu. Pecador impenitent, segons ell matiex confessa, cap dels elements constitutius d'aquest últim món són menys divins i adorables per a l'home que's declara el poeta del còs amb igual títol i amb el matiex entusiasme amb que ell professa ser-ho de l'esperit.*<sup>473</sup>

---

<sup>469</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 95.

<sup>470</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 96.

<sup>471</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 96.

<sup>472</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 97.

<sup>473</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 97.

And why not? Why could a human being not be both corporal and spiritual? Is that not the message of the Trinity in the Catholic Church, the faith in which Montoliu was raised? That even *G-d* is constituted as one and the same - of spirit, mind and body? And is this not the objective of many Eastern religions: to realize our oneness or union with all that is contained in the universe, that we are all as individuals, in turn, a microcosm of the entire universe? And, moreover, Whitman, by stating “very well, then, I contradict myself”, leaves all the space in the world – in the universe – in his one being - to contain all worlds and all universes. Montoliu, although expansive for his time and place and despite making these above-mentioned claims, still felt, however, that the spiritual was, in the end, more important for Whitman – either because he felt it could be duly demonstrated, or because he himself could not quite integrate superficial contradictions to experience the complete whole. He states:

*Dotat com estava d'un físic heroic, de singular perfecció i bellesa, la fibra especial del seu temperament és, amb tot, espiritual. Ell mateix regonegué pràcticament, i en una extensió tal sols a uns pocs elegits els és dat regonèixer, que la realitat central del ser és l'ànima. Alegrement abocat a aquesta gran aventura, tot ho gosa, to ho arrisca, to ho sofreix. La seva felicitat està en la persecució de la gran gesta. Sa recompensa és conèixer a Déu.*<sup>474</sup>

Montoliu concludes, then, that Whitman is an enlightened being<sup>475</sup>, but if this is so, then Whitman would live both – *all* - realities of his being equally and with no concept of their duality or, even less so, hierarchy.

If there is someone who seems to accept all of existence as part and parcel of a whole, it is Whitman, as the “profeta d'una religió més gran”<sup>476</sup> and Montoliu can appreciate this desire, and

---

<sup>474</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 100-101.

<sup>475</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 103.

<sup>476</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 103.

its novelty as a “nou evangeli whitmanià”.<sup>477</sup> He continues his essay, in fact, with a discussion on Whitman’s, in the end, pantheism:

*Whitman creu en la divinitat de totes les coses, sense que això vulgui dir que cada una sigui Déu, sino més bé que Déu se revela en totes i en cada una. « Déu no limita sa revelació a les biblies i oracles. Déu no parla solament per boca dels profetes. Déu se manifesta en cada objecte, respira en tota cosa viventa, i es mou en cada pensament i en cada acte de l’home.»<sup>478</sup>*

For Montoliu, it is clear that Whitman is an enlightened being and he even points to a passage that for him could describe the actual moment of Whitman’s enlightenment:

*...such a transparent summer morning, ...*

*Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge that  
pass all the argument of the earth,  
And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own,  
And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own,  
And that all the men ever born are also my brothers, and the  
women my sisters and lovers,  
And that a kelson of the creation is love, ...<sup>479</sup>*

This is a surprising excerpt, nonetheless, for the parts directly preceding and directly following “morning”, which Montoliu does not include, as well as his punctuation which contains three errors.<sup>480</sup>

*(I mind how once we lay) such a transparent summer morning, ...*

*(How you settled your head athwart my hips and gently turn'd over  
upon me,  
And parted the shirt from my bosom-bone, and plunged your*

---

<sup>477</sup> Montoliu, *L’home i sa tasca*, 72.

<sup>478</sup> Montoliu, *L’home i sa tasca*, 103.

<sup>479</sup> WhitmanArchive.org <http://whitmanarchive.org/published/LG/1891/poems/27>, March 31, 2017.

<sup>480</sup> Montoliu presents first line of his citation with a capital letter, “En...”, as if this word was the beginning of the line; he also capitalizes “Amor” which is not capitalized in the original; and he places a full-stop at the end of this final line, though in the original, “love” is followed by a comma, then four more lines of that stanza: “And limitless are leaves stiff or drooping in the fields // And brown ants in the little wells beneath them, // And mossy scabs of the worm fence, heap'd stones, elder, mullein // and poke-weed.” Montoliu, *Op. Cit.*, p104 and <http://whitmanarchive.org/published/LG/1891/poems/27>.

*tongue to my bare-stript heart,  
And reach'd till you felt my beard, and reach'd till you held my  
feet.)*

*Swiftly arose...*<sup>481</sup>

This is important for at least two reasons. First of all, the lines that Montoliu excludes here are lines of the body, or, rather, two bodies, and here Whitman could very well be read as equating enlightenment with sex, or enlightenment – arriving at a transformed spiritual state – *through* the body, or, as Henry Seidel Canby coyly states more broadly in his (underrated) biography of Whitman, *Walt Whitman: An American*:

*These Transcendentalists, to whom Whitman owed so much inspiration, were constantly striving to lift love above sex. But Walt was constantly striving to lift sexuality into love.*<sup>482</sup>

At least in this stanza, the persona of the poet is not transformed (simply) by contemplating blades of grass. Secondly, in other parts of Montoliu's essay, not only does he include a section entitled "Ètica – Qüestió sexual", he discusses quite often and openly Whitman as (also) a poet of the body, although, yes, not always in a sexual way:

*...puix la salut de Whitman és quelcom de fonamental (constitucional, diríem usant son òpropi llenguatge) en sa naturalesa ; quelcom que irradia de son còs perfecte, transfundint-se en tota sa obra.*<sup>483</sup>

*...no semblava sentir, al menys amb l'intensitat ordinària, la màgica atracció femenina...(però) semblava afectar tant a homes com dònès...*<sup>484</sup>

Speaking of Whitman's stay in New Orleans, where he went to work at the city paper, the Daily Crescent, and at which time, as was widely purported in Montoliu's era and up until perhaps the 1990's, he had an affair with a woman, Montoliu says: "Una sola experiència li mancava, "la

---

<sup>481</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 104.

<sup>482</sup> Canby, Henry Seidel. *Walt Whitman: An American*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1943, p191.

<sup>483</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 27.

<sup>484</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 33-4.



revelació total del cor femení' ”<sup>485</sup>, but does not state that this is where that lack was remedied. And then, again, the body and its questions, when Whitman confronted the effects of his strokes on his once ambulant body:

*Poc a poc, perden les seves forces d'ateleta caigut, els séus passejis per les vies i voltants de la ciutat se feien cada cop més singulars, i l'impenitent vagabond, que ell seguia essent, se via forçat a passar dies en la seva cadira d'invàlid...*<sup>486</sup>

If I have taken the time to discuss this question of how Montoliu interprets Whitman's spirituality, and its relationship to physicality, it is because Montoliu himself seems drawn to this question and prioritizes it – and contradicts himself therein. One can assume, based on his country of residence and his family of active Catholics that Cebrià was raised Catholic, although as an adult he seems to have been open to searching elsewhere for spiritual satisfaction. One can also assume that, as an educated person of his class, he was exposed intellectually, if not directly (via travels, for instance) to the world of religions and lives led from all sorts of perspectives. Would a person so steeped in intellectual work rely less on “faith” in his day-to-day life? I have yet to find proof of Montoliu agnosticism, but it seems at the very least, he drew a clear line between his work as a worker: translator, writer, librarian, *urbanista* and any religious faith he might have practiced. We do know he came from a long line of what can appear today as “staunch” Catholics<sup>487</sup>, but 100 years in the past, in much of Western Europe, in Spain for certain, this was more the rule than the exception.

We also know a bit about other spiritual matters in the family. We know, for instance, that his sister, Maria del Pilar, who, according to Salvador-J. Rovira i Gómez, was “ben dotada per a la

---

<sup>485</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 36.

<sup>486</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 83.

<sup>487</sup> Salvador-J., Rovira i Gómez. *Plàcid-Maria de Montoliu I de Sarriera, primer marquès de Montoliu (1828-1899)*. Arola editors, Tarragona, 2007.

prosa i el vers”<sup>488</sup> published the collection of, more often than not, religious, poems, *Ecos del alma* (1889)<sup>489</sup> before entering the convent, writing the poem “un recuerdo y una esperanza” the eve of her actual commitment.<sup>490</sup> A critic of the time, Juan de Dios de la Rada y Delgado, said that the poetry therein reflected “delicados sentimientos” in sus tres grandes amores: Dios, su familia y su patria” and highlighted “La cierva herida”, “Revelación”, “Flores y Estrellas” as among the strongest.<sup>491/492</sup> Her brother, Manuel, in his *Memorias de infancia y adolescencia: Montoliu, Manuel de, 1877-1961* (1958) would seem to beg to differ.<sup>493</sup>

Another brother, Francesc, to whom Manuel devotes a chapter in his memoir, caused a great family stir when he announced to the family that he had given up his faith in Catholicism. He went on to work in Madrid, where, not only did he flirt with Theosophy, he was his section’s leader. In the end, he became a Buddhist. This all to say that Montoliu, I believe, based on his upbringing and his interest in Whitman’s metaphysical leanings, is also open to the question of religion, and of faith in general, and was curious himself of other belief systems other than the Catholic one dominating his nation and this era. Perhaps, too, he, modest as we have shown to be, did not want to cause another family upheaval, as Francesc had, by addressing aloud his spiritual ruminations – was he drawn to the Quakers’ way of being “moved by the spirit”? Was he a Freemason?

---

<sup>488</sup> Montoliu, *L’home i sa tasca*, 164.

<sup>489</sup> Montoliu, Maria del Pilar, de y de Togores. *Ecos del alma* (Barcelona: Eudaldo Puig, 1889).

<sup>490</sup> Salvador-J., Rovira i Gómez. *Plàcid-Maria de Montoliu i de Sarriera, primer marquès de Montoliu (1828-1899)*. (Tarragona: Arola editors, 2007), 164.

<sup>491</sup> Salvador-J., Rovira i Gómez. *Plàcid-Maria de Montoliu i de Sarriera, primer marquès de Montoliu (1828-1899)*, 165.

<sup>492</sup> These three poems are reproduced in the Appendices under the heading: “Montoliu, Maria del Pilar, Poet”.

<sup>493</sup> Montoliu, Manuel. *Memorias de infancia y adolescencia: Montoliu, Manuel de, 1877-1961*. Tarragona : Diputación Provincial de Tarragona, Institut d’Estudis Tarraconenses Ramon Berenguer IV, 1958.

As far as differentiating himself from the family, and skirting scandal, it seems it would have been already enough for him to refuse the noble “de” of his name, to be a trained lawyer, someone of a respectable profession, but who never practiced law, to train himself well enough in architecture and urban planning issues to take on the mission of the Garden City, to continually struggle – through his writing, his translating, he organizing, his travels - for all people’s rights, not just those of his class, to be concerned with women’s lives and rights, to be an ‘internationalist’ in the sense of being a believer in the idea of a “league of nations”, to be in a first committed relationship later in life, not in a timely manner for his era and family tree - and perhaps not even to have married Lucia Blasian at all.<sup>494</sup> Furthermore, all this is to say nothing of the still unknown family history and background of Lucia Blasian, the woman with whom he at the very least shared a Paris apartment and with whom he voyaged to the US and with whom he shared his life up until his death in New Mexico, during their road trip, on vacation from their respective teaching posts at Washburn University, from Kansas City to California.

---

<sup>494</sup> I was under the assumption that Montoliu had met his “partner”, let’s say (although I did also think that, given the time period, they were most likely legally married), Lucia Blasian once he was in the United States. Re-reading a letter Montoliu wrote to his friend JM de Sucre (August, 1920) in which he tells his friend that when he is in Paris, he should look him and “la meva muller” up at their apartment in Paris. After reading this, it is certain, of course, that they met before their trip together that year to the US. On the other hand, although the letter also points to them being married, “la meva muller”, as I believe in all romance languages, can mean both woman and wife. Perhaps the expression “la meva parella” did not yet exist in that era; perhaps they weren’t married, but referred to each other as husband and wife to make things easier on themselves in a world where this would have been atypical, to say the least. Conducting research very soon afterwards in Tarragona, I noticed on the extensive family tree, found in Placid-Maria de Montoliu i Sarriera: Primer Marques de Montoliu (1828-1899), by Salvador-J. Rovira i Gómez, Arola Editors, Tarragona, 2007 that he had marked Cebrià as not married. Before leaving Tarragona, lost looking for the Arxiu, the security guard at another city office listened to my story and let me know that the Registro Civil was across the street. And so I went and explained the information I was looking for. A very open-minded employee there let me give him a written version of what I was needed, and, within a week, wrote me an email (March 29, 2017) telling me that no record of any marriage of this Montoliu was found in the framework I gave him. I thought then that I would proceed to check with the Registro Civil here in Barcelona, where, after all, despite being raised in Tarragona, Montoliu had spent his entire university and professional years. Then I found the email to the author of this aforementioned book on Cebrià’s father and wrote to him with my question (email, March 30, 2017). Professor Emeritus at the University of Rovira i Virgil, Mr. Salvador Rovira responded quite quickly, and succinctly, confirming that Cebrià was never married, although in a relationship. For him, this was in line with his way of being and behavior. (email, March 31, 2017).

For Montoliu, the best expression of Whitman's spirituality can be found in the poem, "All is Truth", translated by Montoliu as "Tot es Veritat"<sup>495</sup>, the translation of which, and more of Montoliu's ideas on it, is discussed in the "Cebrià Montoliu, Translator: *Fulles d'Herba*" section of this dissertation. Montoliu places discussion of this poem at the end of this section of his essay, and had placed it also at the end of the twenty-three poems of *Fulles d'Herba*, as Whitman had placed it at the end of his 1891-1892 edition. Of this "excels poesia",<sup>496</sup> Montoliu writes:

*...constitueix el nervi central de séu místic apostolat en cerca i defensa d'una fórmula cada cop més alta, més fonda i més vasta per a la seva religió «més gran» i el séu «culte nou», com ell els anomena.*<sup>497</sup>

Gathering what Montoliu calls "una vasta síntesi teogònica"<sup>498</sup>, Whitman uses known symbols that interchangeable call on the sacred or secular. Never leaving by the wayside the absolute ineffable quality of G-d, Whitman is still able to express in human terms the inexpressible divinity of the universe.<sup>499</sup>

#### 3.2.2.2.2 Ética --- Qüestió sexual

It is difficult to imagine a discussion of Whitman in our current times without a concurrent conversation about his sexuality. Considered conjecture for years, and by many, an insult, it is now widely accepted that Whitman was not asexual, not bisexual, but gay. The letters, requests and literature are long and varied, from Edward Carpenter and John Addington Symonds in England wanting or pressuring Whitman to "come out" and support this other kind of love, or even the burgeoning international gay movement; and the occasional response from a Whitman friend "defending" Whitman from such "charges".

---

<sup>495</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *Fulles d'Herba*. (Barcelona:Tip. L'Avenc, 1910), 101-102.

<sup>496</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L'home i su tasca*. (Barcelona: Societat Catalana d'Edicions, 1913), 106.

<sup>497</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i su tasca*. 106.

<sup>498</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i su tasca*. 106.

<sup>499</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i su tasca*. 106-7.

Speaking to the female persuasion, there was during Montoliu's time, the story of Whitman's "mysterious" experience in New Orleans, when he was there for three or four months working at the Daily Crescent. That summer in New Orleans is no longer seen as being the stage for a sexual experience with a woman – neither the version of his being with a former slave, neither the version of him being with an upper class Creole woman whose family would have not accepted him and who, therefore, could not continue the relationship. Whitman appreciated women, wrote about their equality alongside men – when most were definitely not -, while also addressing the maternal, and had dear female friends throughout his life, notably, of course, Anne Gilchrist, the English writer who fell in love with him reading his *Leaves of Grass* and eventually moved her family to the US, to Philadelphia, to be closer to Whitman, her soulmate.

Before arriving in the US, Gilchrist writes effusive letters to Whitman, who, in his turn, from the letters that we have, responds intermittently and cordially. There is the issue of a conversation the two have together once Gilchrist is settled in Philadelphia with her children, whereby a new understanding seems to be reached and the effusiveness stops, and from there a deep and lifelong platonic friendship takes root. Whitman goes on to be a regular guest at the Gilchrist house, even has his own room there so he can always stay over when he wishes, and develops close relationships with the Gilchrist children, one of which, Herbert, an artist, will create some portraits of the adopted family member. Anne Gilchrist moves back to England, but two children, her daughter in medical school and Herbert, stay in the US. Her and Whitman's correspondence is only cut short with Gilchrist's death.

There is a good chance that Montoliu, vast and deep reader and researcher, and able to read in at least Spanish (the family language, in fact), French, German and English, would have been well-read on this question of Whitman, men, women and his sexuality as well, including where much of these questions of sexuality in general were taking place: in the Anglo-Saxon world. He seems, if the beginning sentence of this section is any indication, in disagreement with the faction that considers Whitman above all asexual, or, in Montoliu's term, ascetic:

*Comencant pels primers, ja s'haurà observat per notes anteriors que, si bé profundament mística, la personalitat de Whitman res té d'ascètica. Cosa rara entre'ls místics, el panteisme de Whitman no és monístic. Al seu dualisme folisòfic correspon lògicament el seu dualisme ètic.*<sup>500</sup>

Montoliu continues, and interestingly, one is no longer sure he is saying what he thinks Whitman thinks on the subject, or what he himself would like to say. He states that the object, the material aspect of life, is neither good, nor bad, that they have their own life and it behooves us to not negate or ignore it. To the contrary, the material aspect life is necessary to the cosmic order, and as such, is not an enemy of the spiritual aspect of life, but rather, opposite complementary poles, that exist together, in a Hegelian synthesis.<sup>501</sup> Here he quotes Whitman: "Si falta l'un, falta amdós, i lo invisible prova per lo visible and el cós no és totalment com l'ànima? I si el cós no és l'ànima, que és, doncs, l'ànima?"<sup>502</sup>

Whitman himself will write not only of the body and the physical, but of *his* physical body:

*Lo físic i lo sensual, en sí mateixos o en ses manifestaciones immediate, tene en mi tanta grapa, que no crec poder mai veure'm lliure d'ells; i no solamente no'ls he negat, sinó que mab-prou-feines he desitjat rebaixar-los.*<sup>503</sup>

---

<sup>500</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i su tasca*. 110.

<sup>501</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i su tasca*. 110.

<sup>502</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i su tasca*. 110.

<sup>503</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i su tasca*. 111.

At the same time, Montoliu warns us not to let be fooled by Whitman's sensuality, for, as Montoliu here states:

*El séu sensualisme...per arrelat i profund que sigui, no és per xò, menys místicament transcendental, com que's troba tot ell assadollat per la no menys profunda i palpitant vida de l'esperit.*<sup>504</sup>

And thus, Montoliu concludes, "el séu mètode ideològic és simplement experimental".<sup>505</sup>

Or, as we read in Whitman's poetry:

*Jo crec en la carn i en els séus apetits,  
El veure, l'oir, el tocar, són miracles i cada part i apèndix de mi  
és un miracle.*

*Diví soc per dins i per fòra, i faig sant tot lo que toco i tot lo  
que'm toca.*<sup>506</sup>

Montoliu thinks it is easy to see how Whitman's sensuality is particularly fundamental to his ethics, that physical attraction is the blind natural impulse. And that once this impulse is "il·luminat per la llum de l'esperit, aquest baix instint és la penyora més alta i més sòlida de l'humana redempció..."<sup>507</sup> He goes further, bringing modern sociology (another topic Montoliu kept up on) into his argument saying that all the social aspects found in Whitman's poetry:

*...els més nobles, per cert, en l'humana constitució, segons els dictats de la moderna ciència sociològia, a qual teoria de l'evolució superorgànica la seva segura intuïció poètica li permetè avançar-se per molts anys.*<sup>508</sup>

Despite this, however – and now we can see where Montoliu is going with his argument, and it is not towards an involved discussion on Whitman's possible homosexuality – Montoliu is left frustrated because, as he says:

---

<sup>504</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i su tasca*. 111.

<sup>505</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i su tasca*. 112.

<sup>506</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i su tasca*. 112.

<sup>507</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i su tasca*. 113.

<sup>508</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i su tasca*. 113.

*...aquesta part, tal volta la més original e interessant del seu estudi, se troba per a l'investigador plena d'obstacles, puix, per estrany que això sembli després de lo dit, lo cert és que aqueix instint en Whitman no afecta precisament grans caràcters de sexualitat.*<sup>509</sup>

And so, although at the beginning of this section Montoliu says that there is nothing of the ascetic in Whitman, he is truly referring to Whitman's relationship to the physical fact of this body. For, in a way, if what Montoliu goes on to say about the poet can be taken as true, then, Whitman, while never ignoring and far from feeling ashamed of his body, celebrates it, but does not take this celebration as far as the physical act of making love to another person, for, as Montoliu will go on to state, living love more in the universal than the personal, or "l'amor en son más ample sentit", "no troba Whitman el lloc per a les subtils psicologies de la tradicional dialèctica eròtica"<sup>510</sup>. If anything, sexual love might be looked upon as a "simple accident" of Nature.<sup>511</sup>

Montoliu, not immune to either his Catholic upbringing or its world of duality, terms Whitman, for this lack of physical relations, "pure", and, furthermore, finds in this "fact" more proof that Whitman addressed the "mitjà home"- meaning, in fact, all humanity:

*Heusaquí una anima pura, d'una puresa molt propera a la santedat, que sent l'amor humà en general amb tanta força com un enamorat amb relació a la seva aimada... l'amor a l'humanitat no és pas en Whitman un sentiment buit i abstracte envers no s'équien boirós ideal pressupost, sinó més bé una sensació imperiosa concreta que li fa bategar còs i ànima davant la simple contemplació del ser humà concret, qualsevolga que sigui, gran o petit, bo o indolent, noble o humil, ric o pobre, de qualsevol raça i de qualsevol sexe -...*<sup>512</sup>

Due to this quite uncommon way of being that was Whitman's, this broad, not only tolerant, but joyous acceptance of life (human or otherwise) in all its forms, his non-dualistic open arms

---

<sup>509</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i su tasca*. 113.

<sup>510</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i su tasca*. 116.

<sup>511</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i su tasca*. 117.

<sup>512</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i su tasca*. 113-4.



towards the body as well as the spirit, his, no doubt, lack of a wife, there were bound to be a myriad of interpretations and perhaps misinterpretations of him. Whitman had friends of both sexes, of varying ages, across formal education levels and social classes, spent days and days riding the New York City omnibuses soaking up humanity, months and months easing injured soldiers' pain, and, later in life, greeting people at the constant "open house" that was his home in Camden. It is in the midst of this discussion, Montoliu makes what can be seen as an oblique reference, a type so common in his era, to Whitman's homosexuality, something, as stated above, the majority of the literary and general public was not ready to make room for at that time:

*...en el nostre món d'odi cruel i fer egoisme, sembla quelcom fòra de lloc ; i així no és estrany que enfront de tant fort contrast no hagin faltat esperits míops i mesquins, els quals, per a explicar son misteri, hagin acudit al vulgar expedient « científic » d'atribuir el cas a morbidesa fisiològia, quan precisament totes les senyals externes, tant en sa vida com en sa obra, coincideixen en no mostrar-nos aquí més que un simple prodigi de salut perfecta.<sup>513</sup>*

This is a topic on which Montoliu comes across very strongly and clearly, revealing what he thinks - and feels - about Whitman, and, as such, is worth quoting at length:

*Heusaquí en ple « segle de les llums » un sant pagà que no creu en la resurrecció del la carn, però que l'adora en aquesta vida, i que no renunciant ni una engruna d'aquest culte groller, ans al contrari, promulgant-lo sens treva, enlaira sobre ell mateix, amb la senzilla força de la seva fè instintiva, la seva visió beatífica d'Amor universal, exaltant-se en tals arrobaments que no sembla sinó una llegítima anella d'aquella mística cadena que procedint d'un punt oposat va, per camí contrari, des de màrtir del Gòlgota fins al pobre boig d'Asís.<sup>514</sup>*

Here Montoliu proposes something akin to the ideas of love found in Plato's *The Banquet*, which he mentions at the very end of this section<sup>515</sup>: that love is far beyond the physical and includes psychological, philosophical and mystical elements. Whitman, expresses the same in a myriad of

---

<sup>513</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i su tasca*. 115.

<sup>514</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i su tasca*. 115-6.

<sup>515</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i su tasca*. 121.

ways via his life, his poetry and prose, and seems content with the term “adhesive” for this type of (level of?) complete love. For Montoliu, a way to conceptualize as a whole Whitman’s ways of being, of loving, would be: “Caritat, Fraternitat i Democràcia”.<sup>516</sup>

### 3.2.2.2.3 Política

Montoliu believes Whitman’s political sensibility is not founded on any abstract idea of human nature, any preconceived theory of human interaction in society, and cannot be considered separately from this universal love described in the previous chapter, a love in which friendship is the guiding principle:

*...Whitman arriba al reialme de la Democràcia, no pas guiat per cap teorema preconcebut, ni fundat en cap abstracció de la natura humana. Es el seu mateix adror filantròpic que li inspira el dogma del companyonatge...sense ’l qual ell no concebeix ni per un instant l’existència de la vida col·lectiva. L’amistat, sobre tot...tant mateix, un jorn, en les planes rientes de l’antiga Hèl·lada, la base mateixa de la més noble cultura humana que’l món hagi assolit, el pren Whitman com la pedra angular de tot el seu edifici social, aquell veritable temple de la Democràcia...<sup>517</sup>*

Montoliu is in a line of commentators who emphasize the idea of friendship, even more than “adhesiveness” in Whitman’s life and work, although, apart from some Anglophone writers, like Dr. Richard Maurice Burke or John Burroughs<sup>518</sup>, he might be at the front of that line. Of the known essays on Whitman to precede Montoliu’s in the Romance language world, the Cuban José Martí’s (1887), the French Gabriel Sarrazin’s (1888/1889)<sup>519</sup>, the Catalan J. Perez Jorba’s (1900) and Léon Bazalgette’s (1908), only Martí and Bazalgette mention it, and only in passing.

Martí states in the sixth paragraph of his essay, “los «camaradas» que no temen codearse con

---

<sup>516</sup> Montoliu, *L’home i su tasca*. 116.

<sup>517</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L’home i sa tasca*. (Barcelona: Societat Catalana d’Edicions, 1913), 121-122.

<sup>518</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *Walt Whitman*. *La Lectura*, Madrid, August 1911, p409. Montoliu mentions, among others, Bucke’s biography on Whitman (1883) and Burroughs’: *Notes on Walt Whitman as Poet and Person* (1867) as fruitful resources on Whitman.

<sup>519</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. “Walt Whitman”. *La Lectura*, Madrid, August 1911.

<https://archive.org/details/lalecturarevista1121unse>, p406. February and April 2017.

este iconoclasta que quiere establecer «la institución de la camaradería»<sup>520</sup>, and Bazalgette would like to establish that:

*It was surely when with them (his friends) that he passed the most delicious moments-arm in arm with some friend, who was ignorant of his authorship of Leaves of Grass, or at least cared nothing about it, he proved the intimacy of friendship.*<sup>521</sup>

However, Whitman is not the only one talking friendship at that time. Friendship, both as a concept and as a practice, was a key factor in personal and political life for the Transcendentalists like Emerson and Thoreau. Thoreau included the theme in his journals as well as his poems.<sup>522</sup> Emerson, of course, wrote one of his most renowned essays on the subject and Montoliu himself, whose enthusiasm, if not affinity, with Whitman's thoughts on matters of friendship come through here, had, by the time this full-length essay<sup>523</sup> is published, already chosen Emerson's *Friendship* to translate (1910) and had also included an "original, critical introduction" to the work, which J.J. Lanero, in his article, "Translation, Interpretation and

---

<sup>520</sup> Martí, José. "El poeta Walt Whitman". Composed in New York for El Partido Liberal, Mexico. April 19, 1887. <http://josemartiyperez.blogspot.com.es/2009/08/breve-cronologia-martiana.html>. June 2016 and April 2017.

<sup>521</sup> Bazalgette, Léon. *Walt Whitman: The Man and his Work*, English translation by Ellen Fitzgerald. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1920), 213.

<sup>522</sup> Thoreau wrote a poem called "Friendship".

(<http://thoreauhenrydavid.pbworks.com/w/page/73071764/%22Friendship%22%20poem%20by%20Henry%20David%20Thoreau>. April 2017), wrote a forty-plus-page essay entitled: *Friendship: An Essay*, not published as its own essay until 1907 in Boston by Alfred Bartlett (<https://archive.org/details/friendshipessay00thor>. April 2017) and also wrote this on the subject: *I sometimes awake in the night and think of friendship and its possibilities, a new life and relation to me, which perhaps I had not experienced for many months. Such transient thoughts have been my nearest approach to realization of it, thoughts which I know of no one to communicate to. I suddenly erect myself in my thoughts, or find myself erected, infinite degrees above the possibility of ordinary endeavors, and see for what grand stakes the game of life may be played. I catch an echo of the great strain of Friendship played somewhere, and feel compensated for months and years of commonplace. It is as if I were serenaded, and the highest and truest compliments were paid me. The universe gives me three cheers. Friendship is the fruit which the year should bear; it lends its fragrance to the flowers, and it is in vain if we get only a large crop of apples without it.*

<https://www.brainpickings.org/2013/07/12/thoreau-on-friendship-sympathy-and-animal-consciousness/>. April 2017.

<sup>523</sup> Montoliu mentions in his introduction to the translation of Whitman's poems that he had wanted to write a more involved introductory essay, but time and editing constraints would not allow it and that a fuller essay would be shortly published. *Fulles d'Herba*, p11. In fact, the essay would not appear until 1913: "...l'autor proposa i l'editor disposa" Montoliu would write in the Preface to his *Walt Whitman: L'home i sa tasca*, p6. In the meantime, *La Lectura: revista de ciencias y de artes*, (Madrid), would publish two extracts of the full essay, in August and September 1911 (so still following Montoliu's translation and introduction of Emerson's *Friendship*) although I found only proof of the ugust, 1911 edition, ie:

[https://archive.org/stream/lalecturarevista1121unse/lalecturarevista1121unse\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/lalecturarevista1121unse/lalecturarevista1121unse_djvu.txt), 404. February & April 2017.

Congeniality: Ralph Waldo Emerson in the work of Miguel de Unamuno”, called “noteworthy”.<sup>524</sup>

The word “friend”, of course, held a special place in Whitman’s lexicon due to his Quaker upbringing at the side of his mother and Montoliu reminds us of this here.<sup>525</sup> The two names of the Quaker belief system are The Religious Society of Friends or Friends Church. It is also common for people, including Quakers themselves, to call Quakers “Friends”. Quakers believe in a democratic access, if you will, to Christ. Christ, by coming onto earth as flesh and blood, gave us this direct access and showed us that the light and knowing of G-d is in each one of us. Traditional testimonies include pacifism, social equality, integrity and simplicity.<sup>526</sup> The Quaker approach to belief is one through action, or, or, “worship as an act of seeking”.<sup>527</sup>

Emerson’s essay, *Friendship*, is one of the most well-respected essays of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. and there is a high probability that Whitman was familiar with it, especially as the subject matter coincided so serendipitously with his upbringing. Emerson is ever grateful for this relationship, founded on truth and nourished with tenderness:

*What so delicious as a just and firm encounter of two, in a thought, in a feeling? How beautiful, on their approach to this beating heart, the steps and forms of the gifted and the true! The moment we indulge our affections, the earth is metamorphosed; there is no winter, and no night; all tragedies, all ennui, vanish, — all duties even; nothing fills the proceeding eternity but the forms all radiant of beloved persons. Let the soul be assured that somewhere in the universe it should rejoin its friend, and it would be content and cheerful alone for a thousand years.*<sup>528</sup>

---

<sup>524</sup> Lanero, J.J. “Translation, Interpretation and Congeniality: Ralph Waldo Emerson in the work of Miguel de Unamuno”, 144. [Dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo/97921.pdf](http://dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo/97921.pdf) / [Dialnet-TranslationInterpretationAndCongeniality-97921.pdf](http://dialnet-translationinterpretationandcongeniality-97921.pdf). Viewed April 24, 2017. Contextos VII/13, 1989 (pp143-152).

<sup>525</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià de. *L'home i sa tasca*. (Barcelona: Societat Catalana d'Edicions, 1913) 122.

<sup>526</sup> [www.quakerinfo.org](http://www.quakerinfo.org). September 2016.

<sup>527</sup> [Religioustolerance.org](http://Religioustolerance.org). September 2016.

<sup>528</sup> Emerson Ralph Waldo, *Friendship* (1841). <http://www.emersoncentral.com/friendship.htm>. April 2017.

For Whitman, too, the soul seeks friendship:

*nor the high  
rain-emitting clouds, are borne through  
the open air, more than my copious  
soul is borne through the open air,  
wafted in all directions, for friendship,  
for love.—*<sup>529</sup>

Against this backdrop of personal light and awareness, this ideal of a shared respect among “friends” and this as foundation of a true democracy, Whitman was in no way blind to critically examining the US and its reality. In other words, reading *Leaves of Grass* and reading *Democratic Vistas* are two very different experiences and the reader might even be challenged to believe that the two important Whitman works, one on verse, the other in prose, came from the one and the same writer, if not for passages in *Democratic Vistas*, like this one below, on friendship and politics and their relationship, that pull her back from the abyss that Whitman portrays US society in the process of becoming:

*"Intense and loving comradeship, the personal and passionate attachment of man to man—which, hard to define, underlies the lessons and ideals of the profound saviours of every land and age, and which seems to promise, when thoroughly develop'd, cultivated and recognized in manners and literature, the most substantial hope and safety of the future of these States, will then be fully express'd..."*<sup>530</sup>

*...not to become a conqueror nation, or to achieve the glory of mere military, or diplomatic, or commercial superiority—but to become the grand producing land of nobler men and women—of copious races, cheerful, healthy, tolerant, free—to become the most friendly nation, (the United States indeed)—the modern composite nation, form'd from all, with room for all, welcoming all immigrants—accepting the work of our own interior development, as the work fitly filling ages and ages to come;—the leading nation of peace, but neither ignorant nor incapable of being the leading nation of war;—not the man's nation only, but the woman's nation—a land of splendid mothers, daughters, sisters, wives.*<sup>531</sup>

and, further:

---

<sup>529</sup> Whitman, Walt. “Live Oak, with Moss”. <http://whitmanarchive.org/manuscripts/liveoak.html>. April 2017.

<sup>530</sup> Whitman, Walt. *Democratic Vistas*. <http://whitmanarchive.org/published/other/CompleteProse.html> , p247. December 2016.

<sup>531</sup> <http://whitmanarchive.org/published/other/CompleteProse.html> , 277.

*(It is acknowledged that we of the States are the most materialistic and money-making people ever known. My own theory, while fully accepting this, is that we are the most emotional, spiritualistic, and poetry-loving people also.)*<sup>532</sup>

As Montoliu puts forth: “Segons Whitman, Amèrica, la seva nació, la nació de l’avenir ha estat fundada única i exclusivament per al definite triomf de la Democràcia...”<sup>533</sup> At the same time, in the delicate wake of the destructive Civil War, and, as he approached the end of his life, the vulgarity and acquisition of the Gilded Age, Whitman felt this Democracy threatened. For Montoliu, this is the veritable *raison d’être* of *Democratic Vistas*.<sup>534</sup> Montoliu gives the floor to Whitman:

*Jamai hi hagué, tal vegada, més vacuitat de cor que actualment i aquí en els Estats Units. La fè sincera sembla haver-nos abandonat ; els principis fonamentals dels Estats ningú els creu honradament...Quin ull...no veu...l’espectacle terrible ? Els homes no creuen en les dònnes, ni les dònnes en els homes...La conversa no és més que un devassall de « badinage »...*<sup>535</sup>

US democracy is an experiment, however, and needs an amount of time proportionate to its size to prove itself, Whitman says and, as Montoliu demonstrates, it is when things look so hopeless that Whitman comes back to the saving grace of ties among friends as the foundation for the ultimate success of the experiment, “la “adhesivitat” o l’amor, que fon, enllaca i agrega, fent companyes a les races i fraternitzant-ho tot.”<sup>536</sup> Adhesiveness, as opposed to amative love<sup>537</sup> then, and religion, that is, spiritual belief, the “solid nexus” of the collective anima.<sup>538</sup>

This social and political contract will exist equally not just for all (male members of all) races, but for women as well:

---

<sup>532</sup> <http://whitmanarchive.org/published/other/CompleteProse.html> , 296.

<sup>533</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L’home i sa tasca*. (Barcelona: Societat Catalana d’Edicions, 1913), 122.

<sup>534</sup> Montoliu, *L’home i sa tasca*, 122

<sup>535</sup> Montoliu, *L’home i sa tasca*, 122.

<sup>536</sup> Montoliu, *L’home i sa tasca*, 127.

<sup>537</sup> Montoliu, *L’home i sa tasca*, 127

<sup>538</sup> Montoliu, *L’home i sa tasca*, 127.

*La Democracia...no solament en els homes sinó també en les dònnes...L'idea de la dòna en l'Amèrica desenrotllada, elevada fins a devenir les robustes e iguals cooperadores dels homes...grans en tot cas com l'home, en tots els rams...par a llançar-se...al mig del tumult de la vida real e independent.*<sup>539</sup>

Whitman means to say that the woman is equal to man, or perhaps superior, with her capacity to carry life, and that, in any case, this maternal role is of key importance to the future generations of a successful democracy, for its “reconstructed sociology”.<sup>540</sup> For Montoliu, these considerations form an “esboc de feminisme integral”<sup>541</sup> and show that Whitman, perhaps like Montoliu himself, believed that no society can claim to be free and just without the complete emancipation of the female gender.<sup>542</sup>

Montoliu concludes this section on Whitman politics by drawing a parallel between Whitman’s inclusive, sweeping poetry and his political discussions which are also at a - despite himself! – conceptual level. *Democratic Vistas* is not, then, a treatise on specific social and political topics of Whitman’s day. As Montoliu says, individualists, as well as socialists, as well as anarchists, can find in Whitman’s thesis arguments to support their particular political stance.<sup>543</sup> Whitman’s vision, and practice, as Social Poet, in poetry as in politics, is based on inclusiveness, adhesiveness and is, thus, in its essence, “kaleidoscòpique”.<sup>544</sup> Montoliu quotes from Whitman’s poem, “All is Truth”, one of the poems Montoliu decided to translate and which we will discuss in the chapter, “Montoliu: Fulles d’herba,” however, the translator and critic also cites a prose passage from Whitman that is just as important to understanding “Whitman politics”:

*Vota sempre, no deixis mai d'intervenir amb tota la teva força i per tots els medis que estiguin al teu encalç, en els destins del teu poble; però desconfia dels partits polítics,*

---

<sup>539</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 130.

<sup>540</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 131.

<sup>541</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 131.

<sup>542</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 129.

<sup>543</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 131.

<sup>544</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 133.

*quals salvtages i ferestes baralles m'alarmen. Estranys a total lei que no seguei la llur propia, sempre més agressius i sempre menys tolerants amb l'idea de conjunt i d'igualtat fraternal, tant mateix, a tu 't pertoca coduir-se sense implícita adhesió a cap partit, i sense cega sumissió als séus dictadors, sinó mantenint-te tu mateix invariablement el jutge i amode tots ells.*<sup>545</sup>

#### 3.2.2.2.4 Estètica

*Via fòra amb els temens de Guerra! Fòra amb la guerra mateixa !...  
...Via fòra amb el vell romanç !  
Fòra amb les noveles, drames i comedies de corts forasteres !  
Fòra amb els versos d'amor, ensucrats de rima, les inintrigue i amoretetes dels desvagats,  
Aptes sols pels banquetes nocturns ont llisquen les paralles a la tardana musica.  
Amb els plaers insans, extravagants dissipacions dels pocs,  
Amb perfum, escalfor i vi, sota enlluernants aranyes.*<sup>546</sup>

Whitman's chosen literary form has an important corollary with the expression of Whitman's thinking and his esthetic ideas, Montoliu puts forth.<sup>547</sup> However, before going further with this proposition, Montoliu waxes bolder:

*...respecte al séu propi estil literari, al dir que consistia precisament en la manca de tot estil...podríem també sentar com principi general el de que la Estètica de Whitman constiteix precisament en la negació de tota Estètica.*<sup>548</sup>

Montoliu goes on to say that there is nothing surprising in this, given the fact that Whitman's "poetic star" developed *organically*.<sup>549</sup> He believes that Whitman's genius contains naturalness and is, simply, *sui generis*. For the faint of heart, or, for the more accurately described precious poets who do not, Montoliu makes clear in passing, deserve the title of "poet", Whitman is far beyond any traditional terms of form and style that they can grasp.<sup>550</sup> He quotes the critic Emile Faguet who, in his critiques in the Revue de Paris, and perhaps elsewhere, apparently wrote that

---

<sup>545</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 134.

<sup>546</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L'home i sa tasca*. (Barcelona: Societat Catalana d'Edicions, 1913), 160.

<sup>547</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L'home i sa tasca*. 135.

<sup>548</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L'home i sa tasca*, 136.

<sup>549</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L'home i sa tasca*, 136.

<sup>550</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L'home i sa tasca*, 136.



poetic creation can be as a mollusk, wanting to create a home onto itself.<sup>551</sup> Montoliu finds this a fitting, logical analogy for Whitman, in line with his integral conception of the universe and, thus, the synthesized projection of the personal consciousness of the poet, whereby whose “I”, “que ferament llança als quatre vents de la poesia” has all idols and formulas fall by the wayside:

*Les rimes i els rimadors passen, els poemes destil·lats de poemes mes passen  
Els eixams de reflectors i de gent polida passen, deixant cendres.*<sup>552</sup>

Mysteriously, however – another essential contradiction –Whitman’s project is radically destructive while, at the same time, strongly constructive in poetic form. Here, Montoliu again turns to the *organic*:

*Nascut orgànicament com un producte de la terra...portant l’individuació de sa poesia fins a l’extrem de no donar-li com objecte altra cosa que l’expressió de la veu de la terra.*<sup>553</sup>

And he finds the same proposition stated in the poetry of Whitman:

*Amb aquests inoïbles mots de la terra és com té lloc l’operació de les ànimes,  
Els mestres coneixen els mots de la terra i els usen més que’ls mots audibles.*

...

*Pensaves que això eren mots, aquestes ratlles dretes, aquestes corbes, angles, punts ?  
No, això no són mots, els mots substancials són en la terra i la mar,  
Són en l’aire, són en tu.*<sup>554</sup>

Whitman, inclusive as ever. He speaks of the voices, the voices of millions, his being one among them, each voice’s qualities intermingling with the others’ qualities. For Montoliu, this means the people, this means democracy. Like an immense tree from this immense land, Whitman and his poetry not only includes the roots, the trunk, the branches of this creature, but is the creature itself: “aquest geni amb la mare Natura, que son aspect no difereix del que’ns presenta una planta

---

<sup>551</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L’home i sa tasca*, 137. “Apparently” because I have as of yet been unable to find the article.

<sup>552</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L’home i sa tasca*, 137.

<sup>553</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L’home i sa tasca*, 138.

<sup>554</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L’home i sa tasca*, 138.

o qualsevol alter ser natural”.<sup>555</sup> For Montoliu, Whitman could be the incarnation of Pan, in his primitive and pagan naturalism, and Whitman’s poetry that speaks to the natural world is, in Montoliu’s opinion, among his strongest, although, and this is worth noting, Whitman, says Montoliu, with his undeniable personality, can never be reduced to pantheism.<sup>556</sup>

Montoliu would like to emphasize that, unlike the great naturalists of his age, Whitman is completely free from “aquella sentimental morbidesa que, de Rousseau ençà, sembla dominar les nobles impulsions de tots els apòstols del “retorn a la natura”.<sup>557</sup> In fact, Whitman is a destroyer of idols, including any sentimental ideas of nature, as is, Montoliu states, “el subtilíssim Nietzsche”.<sup>558</sup> Montoliu greatly admired Ruskin and references him often. Montoliu had already

---

<sup>555</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L’home i sa tasca*, 139.

<sup>556</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L’home i sa tasca*, 139.

<sup>557</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L’home i sa tasca*, 141.

<sup>558</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L’home i sa tasca*, 141.

In fact, Montoliu is not the only one to have considered the relationship between Nietzsche and Whitman. up until that historical point. Jorba, too, in his 1900 essay on Whitman, finds a relationship of “philosophical sensibility” between the two men, although, frustratingly, he does not develop this line of thought except to say that: “(Nietzsche) tornant-se vell, en comptes d’entregar-se a un misticisme senil, en Whitman entra am l’esperit obert a una situació d’idealitat i de realitat metafisques, la seva imaginació s’en-somnia dintre d’un panteisme simbòlic.” (Jorba, J Perez. *Catalònia*, February 10, 1900, Lead article). (Was Montoliu responding to Jorba, in fact, when he bluntly stated that Whitman’s way of being could not be confused as a type of pantheism, as cited above? (Montoliu, Cebrià. *L’home i sa tasca*, 139). <http://whitmanarchive.org/published/foreign/spanish/vasseur/introduction.html>.) 2015, 2017. Also, Traubel, after the death of Whitman, went onto a life of editing and writing of his own, founding *The Conservator*, in Philadelphia. In February 1908 (18:188), Traubel takes the time to review the book *The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche* (Boston: John W. Luce and Company) by the author Mencken who goes otherwise unidentified. Although Traubel states that he does not know Nietzsche well enough to truly know if Mencken has done a good job, and though he mentions Whitman nowhere specifically in this review, one can gather the imprint of Whitman and his influence and/or Traubel’s natural affinity to ideas much more in line with Whitman in such statements as, when paraphrasing Nietzsche: “The super- men will always be exclusive. Always the freeman on the top. Always the slave below. But I don’t see how that tub will hold water. The man on top can never be free until the man below is free.”(9); and “Nietzsche talks magnificently about the individual. And in so far as he contemplates the individual in the crowd he is final. But when he portrays the individual set off from the crowd, disavowing the crowd, he has put him on a quicksand.”(10); “Nietzsche stops with the enfranchisement of the superman. I would never be satisfied either to leave the race behind or be left behind. All worlds are my worlds. All advances are my advances. And there’s no reason why every man should not say that for himself.”(10); and, as a conclusion: “It would be foolish to deny that Nietzsche is a luminary. It would be equally foolish to declare that he is a cosmos.” (11). This article and citations were taken from “Conserving Walt Whitman’s Fame, Selections from Horace Traubel’s *Conservator* : Horace Traubel’s Editorial Style, Credo and Worldview“, Ed. Schmidgall, Gary. *The Iowa Whitman Series*, Ed. Folsom, Series Editor (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 1-35. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/pdf/anc.01066.pdf> April 2017.

Following the work of these writers, this relationship would garner much attention, although as Mullin states in her essay “Whitman’s Oceans, Nietzsche’s Seas” (*Philosophy Today*, Fall 1998).

translated Ruskin<sup>559</sup>, thus beginning a full decade of his bringing great minds' and their work to the Catalan language and the Catalan people. Bringing to bear his knowledge and opinion of Ruskin on Whitman, Montoliu states:

*El mateix Ruskin, que amb el seu temperament tants punts téde contacte, no sigui més que baix aquest aspecte, àdhuc essent tal vegada entre 'ls moderns el sol que l'aventatja, en l'intensitat de la fusió contemplativa amb l'ànima, que (si val la paradoxa) podríem dir-ne inanimada, de la natura inconscient, el mateix Ruskin, amb quals immortals pàgines descriptives arriben a parangonar-se moltes creacions de la paleta literaria de Whitman, qualsevol que sigui el resultat de la comparació des del punt de vista de l'eficàcia pràctica dels respectius evangelis, no hi ha dubte que sembla malsà al costat de l'opulent equilibri fisiològic que rumbeja la sapada musa del seu èmul i en certa manera company de causa, amb qui, per rara circumstància, no sembla haver tingut cap mena de relació personal, no havent mai regnat entre ells gran simpatia.<sup>560</sup>*

For Montoliu, this seems natural, given the difference in birth, place and privilege. Whitman was “saturated” with a limitless faith and an “optimisme absolut”, experiencing life in “sa perfecta amoralitat pre-nietzscheana en lo ètic” and was able to claim that “tot es veritat”, that the “savía

---

<https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1P3-35679219/whitman-s-oceans-nietzsche-s-seas>. April 2017): “Although Nietzsche did own a book by Karl Knortz entitled Walt Whitman: Vortrag, we have no evidence that either Nietzsche or Whitman ever read the other's work, and while both mention Emerson in their published and unpublished writing, neither Whitman nor Nietzsche mention one another. As early as Vasseur's preface and footnotes to his translation of *Leaves of Grass*, as Price and Cohen point out in this same whitmanarchive article mentioned in this footnote, this relationship would be explored: “El cosmos yanqui era, en su vida y en su naturaleza, lo que el poeta germano había soñado ser: la fuerza y la dulzura, la belleza y el desinterés. Walt Whitman ejerció de enfermero voluntario durante la guerra de Secesión. En los hospitales de Wáshington contrajo la enfermedad que minando su organismo titánico degen eró en treinta años de parálisis. Nietzsche fué también enfermero durante la guerra francoprusiana (1870-71). Á las emociones de esa época y al abuso ulterior de cloral se atribuye la demencia que idiotizó sus últimos años. Ambos son, a mi juicio, los líricos máximos del siglo pasado. El alemán, con las limitaciones que le imponía sus criticismo filosófico y las complejidades de su gran cultura clásica. El yanqui con los deslumbramientos de su trascendentalismo religioso y las ingenuidades de su augusta autodidaccia. Aquél, concentrado y explosivo, a semejanza de los inflamables de los arsenales prusianos; éste, desbordante y por momentos monótono, como las cataratas de su patria.”

<http://whitmanarchive.org/published/foreign/spanish/vasseur/text.html>

April 2017. For more on this relationship, consult CN Stavrou's *Whitman and Nietzsche: a comparative study of their thought* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964); “Allen, Gay Wilson. "A Note on Comparing Whitman and Nietzsche." *Walt Whitman Review* 11 (September 1965), 74-76; “Kingdom of This World: Whitman and Nietzsche Compared." Del Caro, Adrian. *Walt Whitman: Here and Now*, (1985). pp. 193-215; and “The Making of the Perfect Soldiers: Nietzsche and Whitman”, Stegemoeller, Martin F. (Dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1995).

<sup>559</sup> Ruskin, John. *Fragments* (Barcelona : L'Avenç, 1901) and *Natura: aplech d'estudis y descripcions de sus bellesas* (Joventut, Barcelona, 1903).

<sup>560</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L'home i sa tasca*, 141-2.

regla” of life is that all is bounty...and so why not also, as Montoliu says he senses in the depths of Whitman’s heart, the “logical” corollary of beauty?<sup>561</sup>

This is thus where we need to place Whitman’s esthetic:

*...en el meravellós panorama tant multiforme de la seva interpretació estètica de l’univers pluralistic...la natura primitiva...l’home i l’humanitat...des de més salvatges instints ancestrals fins a les més temeraries concepcions de la cultura social moderna...que lluny ens trobem aquí d’aquella...famosa divisió del tradicional credo estètic...entre assumptes nobles i assumptes vulgars.*<sup>562</sup>

Whitman’s claim of “L’home modern jo canto”, Montoliu states is a proclamation that includes not only Whitman, but all people, and not only people but “màquines, ferro-carrils, tasques parlamentaires, investigacions científiques”, just as one finds in Whitman’s “Cant de l’Exposició”, one of the poems from *Leaves of Grass*, as mentioned before, that Montoliu chose to translate.<sup>563</sup> In this poem, Whitman’s muse, according to Montoliu, is in a “grandiosa concepció sintètica de les immenses possibilitats de restauració que’ls nous productes de l’enginy humà semblen prometre al consumit domini de la poesia i de l’art.”<sup>564</sup> For Montoliu, Whitman has done nothing short of forming a new school of *ars poetica*, even if Whitman himself does not designate it in such an institutional way – and never would. Whitman himself says:

*La Ciència moderna i la Democràcia semblaven llançar un repte a la Poesia per a que aquesta les inclogués en ses afirmacions com una contradicció amb els cants i els mites del passat. Segons ara jo veig (potser massa tard), jo he acceptat aquest repte sense adonar-me’n, i he fet una tentativa en tals afirmacions, -- lo que, en veritat, no pretendria fer ara que conec més clarament lo que signifiquen.*<sup>565</sup>

---

<sup>561</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L’home i sa tasca*, 142-3.

<sup>562</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L’home i sa tasca*, 143.

<sup>563</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L’home i sa tasca*, 144-5.

<sup>564</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L’home i sa tasca*, 145.

<sup>565</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L’home i sa tasca*, 146.

Whitman also said that the Old World had its myths – of feudalism, conquests, dynastic wars, but that the New World needs “poemes de realitats i ciències, i del democràtic i bàsica igualtat, que seràn més grans.”<sup>566</sup>

As a final, but far from insubstantial word, Montoliu would like to go back to a point he had made earlier in his essay (found in the section “The Man”), that of the fact that Democracy meant “religion” to Whitman. I would continue to argue that in today’s wording, we would more likely use the word “spirituality” here, or even, simply, “way of life”, for Whitman was far from arguing for one “religious”, or dogmatic religion over another. His vision would be to bypass Old World myths, including those of one religion being the answer, or the right religion, more than any other. Montoliu is right to equate Whitman’s democracy a religion, if we think of religion, for many still, but for most, it would seem, up until the democratic revolutions on the North American continent and in France, as the basic foundation and guiding ethical light for how to live, part of an indivisible whole of personal and societal conduct, which, of course, would also include art and questions of beauty. Since this is not the first time in the essay that Montoliu brings this up, it is curious that he did not substantiate his argument with Whitman having clearly expressed his desire that his *Leaves of Grass* become the “new American Bible”.<sup>567</sup> Here, Whitman speaking to Traubel about his book becoming gradually more known:

*We are coming to the front at last—and should come. I have no fear, no doubt. It is only a question of waiting a few years till men have time to take it in. Another quarter or half century will see “Leaves of Grass” acknowledged to be what it really is—the Bible of America.*<sup>568</sup>

---

<sup>566</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L’home i sa tasca*, 146-7.

<sup>567</sup> The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed 2013. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/anc.00152.html>.

<sup>568</sup> Traubel, Horace. *With Walt Whitman in Camden*. 9 vols. Vols. 1-3. 1906-1914 (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, (1961), 167. *With Walt Whitman in Camden*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1961; Vol. 4. Ed. Sculley Bradley. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1953; Vol. 5. Ed. Gertrude Traubel. Carbondale: U of Southern Illinois P, 1964; Vol. 6. Ed. Gertrude Traubel and William White. Carbondale: U of Southern Illinois P, 1982; Vol. 7. Ed. Jeanne Chapman and Robert Maclsaac. Carbondale: U of Southern Illinois P, 1992; Vols. 8-9. Ed. Jeanned

Curious, then, until we see how close the dates were to the Volume III of Traubel's diary of his daily presence in the life of Whitman, *With Whitman in Camden*, being published, containing this above entry from Saturday, November 24, 1888 and the writing and publication of Montoliu's essay on Whitman. The first edition of this Traubel volume was published by Mitchell Kennerley (New York) in 1912, and also copyrighted by The Century Company (New York) in that same year. What are the chances that with such short delay, for the era, that Montoliu would have had access to this citation, a citation whose contents Montoliu had already intuited from his close reading of Whitman's work? Traubel went on to copyright the work in 1914, a year after Montoliu's essay was published...

#### 3.2.2.2.5 Art Poètica

*...ningú comprendrà els meus versos, si insisteix en considerar-los com una operació literari, o com un assaig de tal operació, o com mirant principalment a l'art o a l'esteticisme.*<sup>569</sup>

Walt Whitman, *Backward Glance o'er Travel'd Roads*. (1891).

-----

On the matter of taking up the challenge to address Whitman's *Art Poètica*, Montoliu states:

*D'acceptar una molt estesa, anc que no menys convencional, divisió Nietzscheana, se deuria, en veritat, començar per dir que Whitman és un poeta dionisiac, en oposició a la forma apol·linia de la poesia, qual suprem representat en els temps moderns podem senyalar-lo en la figura olímpica de Goethe.*<sup>570</sup>

Dionysius, Apollo, Nietzsche and Goethe. Quite a start.

José Martí, in his thoughts on Whitman, does not name Dionysius, or Apollo, or

---

Chapman and Robert Maclsaac. Oregon House, Calif.: W.L. Bentley, 1996. The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed April 2017. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/traubel/WWWiC/3/whole.html>.

<sup>569</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L'home i sa tasca*. (Barcelona: Societat Catalana d'Edicions, 1913), 162. "No one will get at my verses who insists upon viewing them as a literary performance, or attempt at such performance, or as aiming mainly toward art or æstheticism." From *Backward Glance o'er Travel'd Roads*, Walt Whitman (1891).

<sup>570</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 149-150.

Whitman's relationship to Nietzsche or Goethe, but he speaks to the some of the same themes when he says of Whitman: "con su creencia en que "el más breve retoño demuestra que en realidad no hay muerte"<sup>571</sup>, and :

*Whitman, un cosmos, el hijo de Manhattan, turbulento, sensual, carnoso, que come, bebe y engendra", ni más ni menos que todos los demás. Pinta a la verdad como una amante frenética, que invade su cuerpo y, ansiosa de poseerle, lo liberta de sus ropas. [escena del Tambour] Pero cuando en la clara medianoche, libre el alma de ocupaciones y de libros, emerge entera, silenciosa y contemplativa del día noblemente empleado, medita en los temas que más le complacen: en la noche, el sueño y la muerte; en el canto de lo universal, para beneficio del hombre común.<sup>572</sup>*

J. Perez Jorba, in his essay on the poet, finds Whitman more of a combination of the Dionysian and Apollonian archetypes, ranging from the epic voice of Homer, to a voice of decadence:

*Esperitua i carnal a la vegada, selvatge i cultivat al'ensem, en Whitman mostra el seu esperit en pensaments energies, en emocions rudes i en observacions subtils. El seu cor palpita quasi sempre cedint al fort impuls de lo epic; i repic d'ell és homèric i alhora decadentista.<sup>573</sup>*

But, at the same time, after such statement such as: "els seus versos, més que pel retrat, en Whitman produeix l'il·lusió d'una figura atlètica"<sup>574</sup>; "Literàriament, en Whitman és un poeta incoherent i impressionista"<sup>575</sup> and "ls seus cants resulten verament impressionistes d'idea i de sensació. Y I aquesta incoherència mental, fosa dintre de l'emoció, té certa consemblança am la *sensibilitat filosòfica* den Nietzsche."<sup>576</sup>, it should be noted, Jorba goes on to state that Whitman is, in the end, i"mes aviat cerebral que sentimental"<sup>577</sup>.

Jorba also comments on Goethe and Whitman, and their relationship to time:

*En Whitman, per lo que s transllueix en les seves poesies, no ha experimentat mai*

---

<sup>571</sup> Martí, José. "El poeta Walt Whitman." El Partido Liberal (1887). Accessed May 2015.

<http://www.damisela.com/literatura/pais/cuba/autores/marti/proceres/whitman.htm>.

<sup>572</sup> Martí, "El poeta Walt Whitman," 1887.

<sup>573</sup> Jorba, J. Pérez. "Walt Whitman." Catalònia. (No. 6, February 10, 1900), 52-4.

<http://mdc2.cbuc.cat/cdm/compoundobject/collection/catalper/id/49/rec/25>. Accessed February 2017.

<sup>574</sup> Jorba, J. Pérez. "Walt Whitman," 52.

<sup>575</sup> Jorba, J. Pérez. "Walt Whitman," 52.

<sup>576</sup> Jorba, J. Pérez. "Walt Whitman," 52.

<sup>577</sup> Jorba, J. Pérez. "Walt Whitman," 52.

*l'engunia paorosa del temps o de lo transitori. Ha cregut en l'eternitat de lo temporal. El moment, com diu en Goethe, és el símbol de l'eternitat. I el poeta dels Cops de timbal expressa: «Jo accepto absolutament el temps».*<sup>578</sup>

And what does Whitman himself have to say on these themes, possible relationships and influences? According to Maurice O. Johnson, in his article “Walt Whitman as a Critic of Literature”, Homer was Whitman’s favorite among the Greeks:

*I envy Homer," Whitman rather naively told an interviewer. "I envy him that first strong impression of things. To him it was a new heaven and a new earth. Every poet since Homer has been at a disadvantage, has had to see and feel and describe what has all been seen and described before."...[Homer] sang of great men and their wars, "throwing together in perfect proportion a perfect poem, noisy, muscular, manly amative, an amusement and excitement, a sustenance and health."*<sup>579</sup>

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were well-appreciated by Whitman, in their eulogizing of courage and dependence upon self, but they did not fit into his ideal democracy. Homer had written of god-like kings in his sweeping poetry; and grand as the poetry might be, these characters were not acceptable in a democratic America. From the Walt Whitman Archive:

*America*

*No Homer, Shakspere, Voltaire  
No ~~palaces~~, Kings' palaces "or courts,  
No' armies, ~~navies~~ on the land, nor navies on the sea,*

*But countless living equal men  
Average free*<sup>580</sup>

---

<sup>578</sup> Jorba, J. Pérez. "Walt Whitman," 53.

<sup>579</sup> Johnson, Maurice O. "Walt Whitman as a Critic of Literature" (1938). University of Nebraska Studies in Language, Literature and Criticism. Paper 7. <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/englishunslc/7> (May 10, 2015), 12.

<sup>580</sup> Whitman, Walt. "America". Between 1870 and 1892. Accompanying editorial note on fragment:"This manuscript was likely composed in the last two decades of Whitman's career (roughly 1870–1892) when he was more apt to mention other writers explicitly in his poetry. This poem was not published in Whitman's lifetime. Despite its title, this manuscript does not appear to be a draft of the poem "America" that Whitman published in 1888." <http://whitmanarchive.org/manuscripts/transcriptions/loc.00006.html>.



Johnson considers one of Whitman's "most mature" journalistic book reviews the one on the translation of Goethe's autobiography from which Whitman quotes four long extracts from the book and generously comments on it, saying:

*This Life of Goethe-this famous Wahrheit und Dichtung-seems shaped with the intention of rendering a history of soul and body's growth. . . . It goes right on, stating what it has to say, exuberant in its seeds of reflection and inference-though it doesn't reflect or draw the inference.*<sup>581</sup>

Whitman told Horace Traubel some decades later that Goethe's purpose in writing seemed to him to be that of centering all life in himself, of making the universal personified in a single life:

*"I have read Faust," he told Traubel; "looked into it-not with care, not studiously, yet intelligently, in my own way. . . . Goethe was for beauty, erudition, knowledge-first of all for culture."*<sup>582</sup>

Whitman finds Goethe, moreover, more Roman than Greek: "Goethe's constraint was Roman (Stoic) not Greek: the Greek let go; in sorrow, in joy, let go."<sup>583</sup> In any case, Goethe, admirable as he may be, is not suited to American needs. Whitman points to the undemocratic Goethean philosophy which places the artist or poet in a world re-moved from that of common life.<sup>584</sup> In fact, of the Germans, only Hegel proved "fit for America," Whitman exalted Hegel to the place of "Humanity's chief teacher and the chiefest teacher of my mind and soul" and wrote the two-line poem "Roaming in Thought", subtitling it "After reading HEGEL":

*Roaming in thought over the Universe, I saw the little that is Good steadily hastening  
toward immortality,*

---

<sup>581</sup> Johnson, Maurice O. "Walt Whitman as a Critic of Literature" (1938). University of Nebraska Studies in Language, Literature and Criticism. Paper 7. <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/englishunslc/7> May 10, 2015. p16. This book review by Whitman would appear in The Daily Eagle.

<sup>582</sup> Johnson, "Walt Whitman as a Critic of Literature," 17.

<sup>583</sup> Traubel, Horace. *Walt Whitman in Camden*, vol 1. June 19, 1888. (Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1906), 357. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/traubel/WWWiC/1/whole.html>.

<sup>584</sup> Johnson, Maurice O. "Walt Whitman as a Critic of Literature" (1938). University of Nebraska Studies in Language, Literature and Criticism. Paper 7. <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/englishunslc/7> (May 10, 2015), 17.

*And the vast all that is call'd Evil I saw hastening to merge itself and become lost and  
dead.*<sup>585</sup>

Montoliu then quickly gets to the heart of it: for him, Whitman is a literary and personal combination of all these facets: he is the poet of the epic personality, the individual made myth:

*Observeu l'antítesi: la personalitat, element líric per excel·lència, reclamant els seus drets sobirans a la plenitud de sa propia vida i narrant en forma èpica (epos) les peripecies de sa heroica migració pels cicles infinits de l'univers en cerca de la suprema afirmació de si mateixa, - tal és l'essència de la poètica whitmaniana...*<sup>586</sup>

Jorba also wrote of Whitman's "epic-ness": "El seu cor palpita quasi sempre cedint al fort impuls de lo èpic; i l'èpic d'ell és homèric i alhora decadentista."<sup>587</sup> Yes, Whitman's work is large, but stems from his own small, individual self made large: "L'individualisme hi agafa proporcions èpiques."<sup>588</sup>, and, again:

*Darrerament, en Whitman, gran aimador de la Vida i gran preuador de la Mort (i perxò ell és completament harmònic) acaba per entrar en una mena de panteisme filosòfic, epic i grandios*" (this final word, a word Jorba uses more than once).<sup>589</sup>

Martí wrote in a much more grounded way in his essay on Whitman. Words like "epic", "hero" are few and far between. Even when Martí speaks of the "universal", it is almost always based in the material life, although he uses the word "person" once and, to note, never the more modern "personality".

*En su persona se contiene todo: todo él está en todo; donde uno se degrada, él se degrada; él es la marea, el flujo y reflujo; ¿cómo no ha de tener orgullo en sí, si se siente parte viva e inteligente de la naturaleza? ¿Qué le importa a él volver al seno de donde partió y convertirse, al amor de la tierra húmeda, en vegetal útil, en flor bella? Nutrirá a los hombres, después de haberlos amado. Su deber es crear; el átomo que crea es de esencia divina; el acto en que se crea es exquisito y sagrado. Convencido de la identidad*

---

<sup>585</sup> Johnson, Maurice O. "Walt Whitman as a Critic of Literature" (1938). University of Nebraska Studies in Language, Literature and Criticism. Paper 7. <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/englishunslc/7> (May 10, 2015), 17.

<sup>586</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L'home i sa tasca*. (Barcelona: Societat Catalana d'Edicions, 1913), 151.

<sup>587</sup> Jorba, J. Pérez. "Walt Whitman," 52.

<sup>588</sup> Jorba, J. Pérez. "Walt Whitman," 52.

<sup>589</sup> Jorba, J. Pérez. "Walt Whitman," 53.

*del universo, entona el “Canto de mí mismo”. De todo teje el canto de sí: de los credos que contienden y pasan, del hombre que procrea y labora, de los animales que le ayudan, ¡ah!, de los animales, entre quienes “ninguno se arrodilla ante otro, ni es superior al otro, ni se queja”. El se ve como heredero del mundo.*<sup>590</sup>

What Jorba writes ties in the Whitman individual to proportions of myth, thus more in line with what Montoliu thinks:

*En la composició « Song of Myself » (« Cant de mi mateix »), en Whitman poetisa i simbolisa la seva propia personalitat, oferint, d'una manera sintètica i detallado alhora, la seva identitat física i anímica. Per l'impressió que causa, aqueix poema llarguissim i curiosissim resulta, i no és pas hiperbolic, colossal i a l'ensemps paradoxal. L'individualisme hi agafa proporcions èpiques...L'individualisme i el particularisme den Whitman enclouen la crisàlide, que se transforma en humanitarisme i universalisme.*<sup>591</sup>

Montoliu continues, saying in terms of Whitman's poetry, form follows function:

*...com a poeta complexe de la total cosmogonia de l'ànima devia trobar per força estret aquest primparat marc musical, i devia maldar, com així feu tota sa vida, en cerca de formes poètiques més amples, ont pogués lliurement buidar les múltiples expansions de la seva consciencia universal, - formes certament imperfectes, com primerenques que són, però que, amb llur natural semblança amb els més primitius assaigs de l'expressió poètica en els boirosos temps mítics, semblen presagiar l'evolució que ha de seguir la poesia a mida que la pensa humana aconseguixi resumiren nova i suprema síntesi el resultat de la seva experiencia penosament adquirida al través de ses seculars migracions.*<sup>592</sup>

For Montoliu, Whitman's lack of interest in following any prescribed form of poetic creation is absolute. What Whitman does is to follow his own poetic “star” and, in doing so, he opens up new and dynamic fields in the poetry of modernity, “un pregón solc com l'enpremta d'un tità sobre la terra”.<sup>593</sup> He finds that Whitman's complete freedom in regards to diction and structure gives form to Whitman's “numen colossal”.<sup>594</sup> Whitman's innovations are not “epidèrmic” nor

---

<sup>590</sup> Martí, "El Poeta Walt Whitman," 1887.

<sup>591</sup> Jorba, J. Pérez. "Walt Whitman," 52.

<sup>592</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L'home i sa tasca*. (Barcelona: Societat Catalana d'Edicions, 1913), 151-2.

<sup>593</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 152.

<sup>594</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 152.

are they “esthetic arbitrariness.”<sup>595</sup> As Whitman, might say, Montoliu thinks he is “the real thing”:

*...ja que authentic per excel·lencia és un art com el de Whitman que, sense ‘l més petit regust d’afectació (per més que a primera vista pugui semblar-ho), naix veritablement del seu numen, i orgànicament creix i es desenrotlla al just compàs i a la justa mida del mateix verb que intent encarnar.*<sup>596</sup>

Without a doubt including the parenthetical phrase to protect himself from critics to come, Montoliu still minces no words when he addresses the ruling class of critics who, he supposes, might very well take offense at Whitman’s work, and Montoliu’s ideas on it:

*Ja’m figure que tota aquesta fraseologia risca molt de fer perdre els estrebs als nivols de sofistes de la poesia que, particularment en els països llatins, semblen empenyats en monopolitzar l’exercici de l’antic sant sacerdoti, tot fent ostentació de sa actual decadència, i preconitzant els procediments contraris, falsament anomenats clàssics, que, per molt respectables, que siguin en llur pruesa, portats a l’exageració, ràpidament degeneren en una mena d’orfebreria que poc té a vuere amb el veritable art diví de la poesia.*<sup>597</sup>

Montoliu cannot stress this point enough. Whitman’s poetry is not constituted of forms molded from gold or silver, nor from precious stones, and is not intended for idle “clients” of art.<sup>598</sup> No. If Whitman is the only poet deserving to be called the “Social Poet” it is because his primary material is the human being:

*...és l’home en tota la seva simple i sublim nuesa, amb totes les seves naturals functions i arrelats impulsos fisiològics, totes les seves espirituals passions i frisances, totes les seves virtuts i crims, l’home en sa completa totalitat, en fi, dins del medi social ont sa personalitat viu en desenrotlla.*<sup>599</sup>

To further support his argument for the revolutionary aspects of Whitman’s work, Montoliu quotes from Whitman’s friend, critic and admirer, Edward Carpenter:

---

<sup>595</sup> Montoliu, *L’home i sa tasca*, 153.

<sup>596</sup> Montoliu, *L’home i sa tasca*, 153.

<sup>597</sup> Montoliu, *L’home i sa tasca*, 153-4.

<sup>598</sup> Montoliu, *L’home i sa tasca*, 154.

<sup>599</sup> Montoliu, *L’home i sa tasca*, 154.

*Amb en Whitman, arriba per primera vegada i d'un modo deliberat i representatiu en literature, el treballador, l'artesà, el normal, o "l'home mitjà"...puix que naturalment, l'home que opera amb la material prima, i amb això's guanya la vida, és l'home normal. Ell no ve com un home que abandona son anterior mester per a córrer a l'encalç d'un ideal literari, sinó com el mestre artesà que roman ont se troba i emplea per expresser-se una forma literari...D'aquí una nova era en la literatura – una literatura que apel·la a tots els qui tenen tracte directe amb la vida...<sup>600</sup>*

For Montoliu, there is a “mysterious” aspect to Whitman’s forms of poetic expression. Is

this simply a way of not analyzing something difficult to analyze in its complete newness for the era? Can he divide his analysis into a discussion on form into two categories, that of structural, or architectural (ie, grammatical) and that of the lyrical, or musical (ie, phonetical)?<sup>601</sup> Does the corporal and emotional aspects of the poetry obfuscate the rational? This will not be the only moment when Montoliu brings up this aspect of Whitman’s work which seems to resist intellectual intervention, and here, he brings in Carlyle, Wagner and Whitman himself to demonstrate his point:

*Heusaquí, en termes generals, breument explicat el misteri de la forma poètica whitmaniana, - misteri que, després de tot, ja poca novetat té pels qui ens hem aveçat a viure en el concepte místic carlylià de la creació poètica, sobre tot d'ença de la gran reforma estètica que Whitman ha acabat per provocar, i que ha trobat sa suprema encarnació, fins ara, en el moviment dit wagnerià.<sup>602</sup>*

And, again, Montoliu lets Whitman speak:

*...com és possible en tals coses de perfecta excel·lència parar-se a examinar la forma com una cosa a part? Jo no dic pas sigui impossible; mes amb seguretat que és molt difícil. No hi ha per ventura certes peces de música tant belles, que quan, a l'oïr-les una i altra vegada, tractem d'analitzar-les, sempre fallim en el nostre intent? No hi ha també per ventura poemes en els qual la pensa es resisteix a comptar les síl·labes?<sup>603</sup>*

And furthermore, again, Whitman:

*Aquí, per sota les ratlles, sent un hom sens treva la polsació d'un metre impalpable...La forma s'esvaïex en el sentit; i això és lo que amb els nostres cossos succeirà algú dia –*

---

<sup>600</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 155.

<sup>601</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 157-8.

<sup>602</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 154.

<sup>603</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 156.

*no desapareixent pas de la vista, mes de tal modo brillant, fosos en lo que ells expressen, que cessaràn de tenir existencia a part.*<sup>604</sup>

The emphasis on the body, by both Whitman, of course, and Montoliu is striking when one considers that it is only towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. that criticism begins to examine literary texts in terms of the body, as the actual place of creation, and reception. Here, we hear from Anne Gilchrist, as Montoliu says, Whitman's "spiritual friend", in the 1870 article she wrote in support of Whitman's work, "An Englishwoman's Estimate of Walt Whitman", wherein she also speaks of the particular physical effects reading Whitman had on her:

*I had not dreamed that words could cease to be words, and become electric streams like these. I do assure you that, strong as I am, I feel sometimes as if I had not bodily strength to read many of these poems. In the series headed " Calamus," for instance, in some of the " Songs of Parting," the " Voice out of the Sea," the poem beginning "Tears, tears," etc., there is such a weight of emotion, such a tension of the heart, that mine refuses to beat under it — stands quite still — and I am obliged to lay the book down for a while.*<sup>605</sup>

What do Martí and Jorba have to say on Whitman's *ars poetica*, meter, the body and its rhythms? Not surprisingly, not much, at least for the latter: the relationship of the body to artistic creation and reception. How could they when such language hardly existed, given the fact that Whitman was only forty-five years before introducing it in poetry and barely any critic had gone on to explicate the work in that context? Moreover, what do we know of Martí's and Jorba's reading of other Whitman critics leading up to their own essays? In his essay, Martí does not even mention Rúbén Darío, a revolutionary poet, already very known in the Hispanic world, and someone who had written the poem "Walt Whitman", included in the second edition of his ground-breaking work, *Azul*?<sup>606</sup> And we will have to take Jorba's (surprising)<sup>607</sup> word on it when

---

<sup>604</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 157.

<sup>605</sup> Gilchrist, Anne. "An Englishwoman's Estimate of Walt Whitman". The Boston *Radical*, May 1870, 345-59. (A Unitarian magazine. Ed. by S. H. Morse. Published by Adams & Co. Boston).

<sup>606</sup> Darío, Rúbén. *Azul*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Imprenta de La Unión: la ciudad de Guatemala (1890). This poem is included in the appendices. Accessed December 2016.

<http://damisela.com/literatura/pais/nicaragua/autores/dario/azul/index.htm>.

he says that, although he knows Whitman is from New York, he mistakenly says he is from Manhattan, and furthermore states, “...on sembla que va neixer pels voltants de l’any 1819. Deu fer cosa de set anys, segons tinc entès, que va morir.”<sup>608</sup>

As for rhythm and meter, Jorba, in the first paragraph of his article, puts forth:

*En el ritme estrelladiç i perllongat dels seus versos, en la melodia novella dels seus cants, un sent bategar amb energia l cor d'un esperit immesurable i paradoxal.*<sup>609</sup>

And:

*El ritme desfet o irregular de ses estrofes, adunant-se a l'absència constant de la rima (am tot i algunes isolades consonàncies i assonàncies, que brollen per atzar i que l'autor respecta), és lo que atança marcadament la poesia de l'autor dels Brins d'herba a la música revolucionaria de Wagner,<sup>610</sup> donant a les seves composicions un aire paregut*

---

<sup>607</sup> Surprising, because of his milieu and because just a few years later, a friend<sup>607</sup> and fellow Catalan, Montoliu, will know so much about the poet.

<sup>608</sup> Jorba, J. Pérez. “Walt Whitman”, 52. Martí himself also has some mistaken ideas of the poet, for example, he says in his essay that Whitman chose to live “en una casita arrinconada en una ameno recodo del campo, de donde en su carruaje de anciano le llevan los caballos”, or “Vive en el campo, donde el hombre natural labra al sol que lo curte, junto a sus caballos plácidos, la tierra libre”. Whitman’s homes were shifting throughout his life, either due to his father’s mostly failed attempts at real estate speculation, the health concerns of his siblings, and, later, upon the death of his mother, his own health, at which time went to live with his friends the Staffords, yes, in the countryside, but where there were no horse carriages. Whitman lived for a time with his brother in what we would term today a suburban house, and then, when he purchased a house of his own, in the city of Camden, he only had a horse and small carriage, thanks to the donation of a group of friends and admirers, including Mark Twain, so he could get around easier after some of his initial strokes.

<sup>609</sup> Jorba, J. Pérez. “Walt Whitman,” 52.

<sup>610</sup> Although Martí does not mention Wagner in his essay, both Jorba and Montoliu do, and they are not the only ones. On this rather popular correlation between Wagner and Whitman, and from some of what Montoliu cites as his own research material, along with Bazalgette: see Burroughs, *Walt Whitman: A Study* (1902): “Such a man as Turner seemed, at first sight, to set at defiance all correct notions of art. The same with Wagner in music, the same with Whitman in Poetry.” Section V, 106 and: “A cry will always be raised against the producer in any field who discards the authority of the models and falls back upon simple Nature, or upon himself, as Millet did in painting, and Wagner in music, and Whitman in poetry.” Section 6, 111; Carpenter, *Days with Walt Whitman* (1906): “There is no need, today, to justify Whitman's forms and rhythms, any more than there is need to justify those of Beethoven or Brahms or Wagner.” 108; and Binns, *A life of Walt Whitman* (1905): “It is rather as a prophet than as a literary figure that we must compare him with his great contemporaries. On this side, he was obviously related to Millet, to Beethoven and to Wagner but it seems simpler roughly to set him over against several men of his own craft who hold a European reputation to Carlyle, Mazzini, Emerson, Morris, Browning, Tolstoi and Nietzsche.” 293 and, Binns describing a dinner conversation between Whitman and a friend: “...Mr. Hartmann declared himself a Wagnerian, but Whitman confessed his ignorance of the “music of the future. Mendelssohn, of course, he knew ; and in later life he had discovered Beethoven as a new meaning in music, and had been carried out of himself, as he says, seeing, absorbing many wonders. But he was brought up on the Italians ; it was from Verdi and his predecessors, interpreted by Alboni, Bettini and others, that he had learnt the primal meanings of music, and they always retained his affection.” 320.

*al que exhibeix la melodia infinita. En conseqüència, els versos den Whitman es poden considerar com a veritables simfonies poètiques.*<sup>611</sup>

Martí has no issue discussing Whitman's form, and the body, but he does not align these two:

*...El se crea su gramática y su lógica...*<sup>612</sup>

*...no tendría palabras tan fogosas para describir la alegría de su cuerpo, que él mira como parte de su alma, al sentirse abrasado por el mar... "¡penétrame, oh mar, de humedad amorosa!"*<sup>613</sup>

*Quiere puertas sin cerradura y cuerpos en su belleza natural; cree que santifica cuanto toca o le toca, y halla virtud a todo lo corpóreo; él es "Walt Whitman, un cosmos, el hijo de Manhattan, turbulento, sensual, carnoso, que come, bebe y engendra", ni más ni menos que todos los demás. Pinta a la verdad como una amante frenética, que invade su cuerpo y, ansiosa de poseerle, lo liberta de sus ropas.*<sup>614</sup>

Martí will also say something somewhat more specific on form:

*¿Rimas o acentos? ¡Oh no!, su ritmo está en las estrofas, ligadas, en medio de aquel caos aparente de frases superpuestas y convulsas, por una sabia composición que distribuye en grandes grupos musicales las ideas, como la natural forma poética de un pueblo que no fabrica piedra a piedra, sino a enormes bloqueadas.*<sup>615</sup>

In any case, Montoliu goes on to state that Whitman performs a *tabula rosa* of all his predecessors, throwing out the mold, as we say, and constructing an original one "a l'exclusiva imatge i semblance del séu personalíssim estre poetic".<sup>616</sup> But here, again, in my opinion, Montoliu, although he does say that, in the case of Whitman, "l'absoluta integritat de sa forma d'expressió fa sovint casi impossible la perfecta distinció d'amdós agrupaments"<sup>617</sup>, does not meet the expectations he himself sets up and veers away from analyzing Whitman's form as such as he ends up talking more about the literal content of the poem - "The Song of the Exposition",

---

<sup>611</sup> Jorba, J. Pérez. "Walt Whitman," 52.

<sup>612</sup> Martí, "El Poeta Walt Whitman," 1887.

<sup>613</sup> Martí, "El Poeta Walt Whitman," 1887.

<sup>614</sup> Martí, "El Poeta Walt Whitman," 1887.

<sup>615</sup> Martí, "El Poeta Walt Whitman," 1887.

<sup>616</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L'home i sa tasca*. (Barcelona: Societat Catalana d'Edicions, 1913), 158.

<sup>617</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 158.



a poem he translated - than of its metrics. Like the poet himself, does he find it too difficult to parse the content from the form, the body from its author, or would that be, the author from his body? It is in this section of Montoliu's essay that we come to appreciate, even as modern readers, the conundrum that Whitman's words present us with, whether because they turned the poetics upside down, or because they are not, in the end, poetry? Just what is this art that defies, first of all, definition, then, examination?

Here are some examples of Montoliu spending pages on *not* discussing architecture nor music:

*En "El Cant de l'Exposició", s'encarrega de sintetitzar-la fórmula fonamental del seu particular verb, quan, a modo de preludi, s'encara amb les velles fórmules...cancel·lant d'un cop de ploma tota l'herència del passat...saludant emfàticament a la «musa moderna»...i així...nascut al calor de l'ambiciosa i moderna llar de la Democràcia...que'ls seus poemes...sorgir, usant una frase seva afavorida, com naturals exfoliacions de la seva ànima, el principal valor i sentit de les quals dimanen de la sola font inagotable de sa robusta personalitat...*<sup>618</sup>

And so, here we are again, in a discussion of the robust (body) and personality. And that is all fine and good. In any case, how does one discuss poetry which is "una poesia antiliteraria per excel·lència"?<sup>619</sup> Montoliu takes here also from Carpenter, with "sa mística penetració habitual"<sup>620</sup> and says that herein lies the heart of the matter: that it is in this anti-literary quality that Whitman transcends not just poetry, but art itself:

*És en aquesta qualitat que transcendeix l'esfera de l'art, - sense que, amb tot i en veritat, sigui assolible altrement que per l'estudi pacient, per la perfecció i el final domini de l'art, - ont jeu el secret del seu poder. En els seus poemes d'aquest ordre no's requereix unitat tècnica (per més que aquesta se trobi en algú d'ells), perquè parlen en nom de l'Identitat (Self), que és i permanenceix l'unitat de totes les coses...No tenen necessitat de cercar unitat ni bellesa, perquè a l'expressar dita identitat, les tals coses ja són fetes i trobades.*<sup>621</sup>

Herein, then, lies at least part of the mystery to which Montoliu refers more than once:

---

<sup>618</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 158-162.

<sup>619</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 162.

<sup>620</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 162.

<sup>621</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 162-3.

*Aquí hi ha un gran misteri difícil d'expressar ; misteri que, deixant l'autor abans citat, enunciaré a esclarir, puix, com ell mateix diu en conclusió, « la música profunda de tot gran poema sols és per a oir-la i absorbir-la en silenci i resisteix a tota anàlisi ».*<sup>622</sup>

Montoliu states here that a further study of this poetic expression is beyond the scope of his present essay, and turns to a discussion on Whitman's metrics, although the reader has been led to believe that this discussion was going to and perhaps even did take place. Furthermore, one of the two of Montoliu's appendices, almost three pages long, is entitled "La Qüestió Mètrica".<sup>623</sup> I will be examining and citing both this appendix and the last pages of "Art Poètica" here.

In Montoliu's opinion, there are many divergent ideas on this very point in Whitman's work, but that, if there is one issue on which varying critics are in agreement, it is on the "potencia avassalladora" of Whitman's "misteriós art de dir".<sup>624</sup> He references Jannacone's *La Poesia di Walt Whitman e l'Evolucione delle Forme ritmiche* (Roux Frassati: Torino, 1898) as his prime source for a nuts and bolts discussion on metrics, explaining that Italian critic divides Whitman's poems into three categories: "poems de ritme cert i rima, poemes de disseny rítmic nèt i poemes de ritme vague".<sup>625</sup>

The first type employ known and regular anglo metrics, and, for Montoliu, there are three: "The Singer in the Prison", "Ethiopia saluting the Colors", and "O Captain, my Captain".<sup>626</sup> The second category are considered to fall between this first category, and the "ritme vague", that is, the rhyme in these fall completely by the wayside and the rhythm is transformed into something purely "psíquic o logic" and, moreover, these rhythms are much more obvious when the poem or

---

<sup>622</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 163.

<sup>623</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 208-210.

<sup>624</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 163.

<sup>625</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 208.

<sup>626</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 208.

poems are read aloud.<sup>627</sup> Here, we can put “Pioneers!, O Pioneers!” and, one the poems translated by Montoliu, “Idols” (“Eidolons”).<sup>628</sup> The third group, “de ritme vague” represent the majority of Whitman poems in that the “ritme sonor és en ells sensible constant.”<sup>629</sup> It is thus, this type of poem that more than less defines Whitman metrics:

*Es en aquests poemes ont el paral·lisme, l'al·literació i les diverses formes de mesura ideològica dels primitius poetes orientals carreguen tot el pes de l'estructura lírica de l'obra, i és en ells ont la grandiosa polifonia de l'estre whitmanià s'eixampla i enlaira fins a perdre's en sublimitats sols comparables a les excelsas harmonies amb que Beethoven i Wagner han fundat la moderna evolució simfònica.*<sup>630</sup>

Within this context, Montoliu points out some of Whitman's uses of punctuation, which for Montoliu, reveal a bit of the poet's originality while, of course, affecting the poems' rhythms. For example, Whitman very rarely uses the period and the comma, and is a complete stranger to the colon.<sup>631</sup>

*Quan té un pensament per expressar, el divideix en parts, que corresponen a altres tants versos. Té el pensament una sola part? Doncs la serie té un sol vers. Ne té un dos, tres, deu, vint, cinquanta i tantes parts? Doncs, el període té altres tants versos.*<sup>632</sup>

Montoliu argues here that these patterns form a rhythm with “marcats caràcters oratoris”, rhythms that sound to the ear like eloquent speeches.<sup>633</sup> In 19<sup>th</sup> c. US, as in Montoliu's time, there was plenty of opportunity to present orally one's ideas, and both Whitman and Montoliu did so. They also listened to others speak. And in the case of Whitman, via his mother, he was exposed to the Quaker tradition of Bible readings and, moreover, as mentioned in the section on Whitman's life, at a young and impressionable age, his parents had brought him to hear one of the most charismatic speakers of the day, Elias Hicks. Montoliu mentions Gamberale's

---

<sup>627</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 208-9.

<sup>628</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 209.

<sup>629</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 209.

<sup>630</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 209-210.

<sup>631</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 165.

<sup>632</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 165.

<sup>633</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 165-6.

introduction to his own translation of *Leaves of Grass* into Italian in 1887 in which Gamberale points out Whitman's own strong ideas on poetry "v." prose and that perhaps poetry in prose is a more modern version of verse, "A l'Àmerica, en tot cas".<sup>634</sup> Montoliu quotes Whitman here:

*En la meva opinió és arribat el temps de destruir radicalment les barreres de forma entre la prosa i la poesia...la veritable i la gran Poesia...ja mai més podrà ésser expressada, en llengua anglesa, en metre arbitrari i rimat, no menys que la gran eloqüència i la veritable força i passió. Àdhuc admetent que les venerables i celestials formes de les sonores versificacions, han representant en llur temps grans i oportuns papers...no és, amb tot, menys vert que ha terminat ja l'època d'aquestes rimes convencionals.*<sup>635</sup>

For Montoliu, this does not translate into a vulgarization of poetry, of rendering it in a negatively construed "mechanical" way, but rather, Whitman's writing lifts "el comú llenguatge del poble a la sublime dignitat d'universal i genuïna eina poètica".<sup>636</sup> In Montoliu's opinion, this is the noble mission of Whitman's work: his techno-literary reform to confront the most transcendental problems of modern ideology. Montoliu sees a future in which literary genres will invade each other's space, and when this "doble moviment" converges on prose and poetry, we will find the qualities of what we usually term for one, or the other, shared between, or should I say, among, the forms? Today's top literary discussions – and publications at top publishing houses – include a major emphasis on the "borders" of genre.<sup>637</sup> More indication of Whitman and Montoliu both being ahead of their times?

---

<sup>634</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 167.

<sup>635</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 167.

<sup>636</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 168.

<sup>637</sup> Search on the internet, for example: "Poetry or Prose: Poetry magazine"; or "Paris Review"; or "Poets & Writers" to see an array of articles on the subject; or leading publishing house Graywolf Press and their authors Claudia Rankine and her: *Citizen: An American Lyric* (2014) of which was said: "Marrying prose, poetry, and the visual image, *Citizen* investigates the ways in which racism pervades daily American social and cultural life, rendering certain of its citizens politically invisible. Rankine's formally inventive book challenges our notion that citizenship is only a legal designation that the state determines by expanding that definition to include a larger understanding of civic belonging and identity, built out of cross-racial empathy, communal responsibility, and a deeply shared commitment to equality". Accessed 2017.  
[http://www.nationalbook.org/nba2014\\_p\\_rankine.html#.WRm3x1KB3rc](http://www.nationalbook.org/nba2014_p_rankine.html#.WRm3x1KB3rc)) or "new essay" essayists Maggie Nelson

### 3.2.2.2.6 L'Herencia de Whitman

In his study, Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca* does not spend an inordinate time on the last chapter, that on the legacy of Whitman. For him, in 1913, there were three main ones: the aforementioned Englishman Edward Carpenter, social activist, philanthropist, critic, poet, whose work, in Montoliu's opinion, was particularly influenced by his theosophist mysticism; the US citizen, Ernest Crosby, a free-thinker, anarchist lawyer poet, who had, according to Montoliu, written "poesies d'una volada extraordinaria, en les quals s'exposen principalment els sofriments dels desheretats", and who had recently died at the time Montoliu was composing his essay; and, finally, the irreplaceable Horace Traubel, the faithful "apostle" of Whitman, who recorded for us all the daily conversations he had with the good, gray poet, and who, after Whitman's death, would found the monthly magazine, The Conservator, in which he would continue to promote Whitman's work as well as his own ideas, and ideals, on the world and humanity's place within it.<sup>638</sup>

In his choice of these three heirs of Whitman's, Montoliu recognizes the multi-faceted aspects of Whitman, his persona, and his work. Like Montoliu himself, Whitman wore many hats: those of the printer, the journalist, the social and political activist, later in life, the critic, of course, the poet, and, here, unlike Montoliu, the capable self-promoter. Edward Carpenter did write a book of poetry, *Towards Democracy*, in a style similar to Whitman's and inspired by his vision of camaraderie<sup>639</sup>, but today he is not known as a poet, so much for his support – material and

---

or John d'Agata (<https://www.graywolfpress.org>); or Brooklyn Arts Press (<http://www.brooklynartspress.com>) or the array of "mixing genres" workshops now held regularly across the US.

<sup>638</sup> Cebrià, Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*. (Barcelona: Societat Catalana d'Edicions, 1913), 173-5.

<sup>639</sup> Lauritsen, John and Thorstad, David. *Los primeros movimientos en favor de los derechos homosexuales: 1864-1935*. Translated by Francesc Parcerisas. (Barcelona: Tusquets, 1974), 66.

spiritual – of Whitman and for his life as an visible, “public” homosexual and his fight for the rights of all homosexuals. At the risk of being anecdotal, I would dare say that Ernest Crosby is *not* remembered. For example, although I grew up in the US, and have now thoroughly studied Whitman, his life and times, I had never heard mention of this man, nor reference to his poem, “The Machine”, which Montoliu found to be “d’una força patètica quasi lapidaria”.<sup>640</sup> But this is another example of Montoliu’s indefatigable research. His, not only mention of Ernest Crosby, but his knowledge of his life and even one of his poems would seem to mean that Montoliu was either a regular reader of Traubel’s The Conservator, or that he knew enough to read some issues for his study on Whitman.<sup>641</sup> As for Horace Traubel, yes, his nine volumes of his diary at Whitman’s side, *With Walt Whitman in Camden*<sup>642</sup> is a priceless look into the man behind the work: his home and family life, his entourage, his reading life and influences, and the events and issues of the day, and it has certainly has added to the cult of personality that has surrounded the poet until today. But, again, although Traubel was a respectable poet, he is not remembered for his poetry, either, and it seems that knowledge of his life as founder, editor and columnist for The Conservator also comes second to his work with and on Whitman through the his journals.

---

<sup>640</sup> Montoliu, *L’home i sa tasca*, 174.

<sup>641</sup> From Whitmanarchive.org, the bibliographic entries for “Ernest Crosby”: 1. Kindilien, Carlin T. "Whitman and the Vagabondians." In *American Poetry in the Eighteen Nineties* (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1956), 169-190. [Ernest Crosby, J. William Lloyd, and Richard Hovey, among other poets and rebels of the Nineties, saw in Whitman's "democratic idealism, his unorthodox speculations on morality and sex, and his symbolic relationships another means to aid them in the shaping of modern reality to poetic ideality."]; 2. Compendium. "With Walt Whitman in Camden." *Conservator* 19 (September 1908), 104-6. [Generally favorable notices of [1908](#) by Stedman, Ernest Crosby, Joaquín Miller, Paul Elmer More.]; and 3. Compendium. "Recent Study and Criticism of Whitman. VII." *Conservator* 8 (October 1897), 122-23. [Includes material from Boston Literary Review, City and State, Progressive Review (Ernest Crosby notes that Tolstoy "could not make him [Whitman] out"), New Unity, as well as annotated items.]

<sup>642</sup> Traubel, Horace. *With Walt Whitman in Camden*. 9 vols. Vols. 1-3. 1906-1914. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1961; Vol. 4. Ed. Sculley Bradley. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1953; Vol. 5. Ed. Gertrude Traubel. Carbondale: U of Southern Illinois P, 1964; Vol. 6. Ed. Gertrude Traubel and William White. Carbondale: U of Southern Illinois P, 1982; Vol. 7. Ed. Jeanne Chapman and Robert Maclsaac. Carbondale: U of Southern Illinois P, 1992; Vols. 8-9. Ed. Jeanne Chapman and Robert Maclsaac. Oregon House, Calif.: W.L. Bentley, 1996.

Montoliu admits, that, particularly in the Anglo-Saxon world, this list of heirs to Whitman could go on and on, but that Montoliu himself, thanks to his being multi-cultural and multi-lingual, and his research that demonstrates this fact, can already take us on a quick European tour of some of those heirs: the German poet and philosopher, Johannes Schlaf; the writer Karl Knotz, the French language poets Emile Verhaeren and François Viéél-Griffin; of course the critic and translator of Whitman, Léon Bazalgette; the critic Pasquale Jannaccone and translator Luigi Gamberale, from Italy; the monumental Basque writer Miguel de Unamuno and Catalan poet and translator Joan Maragall, on top of it, correspondents with one another; and, stepping outside of proscribed borders for a moment, something both Whitman and Montoliu were used to doing, Montoliu brings in the Nicaraguan poet, Rúben Darío.<sup>643</sup> Already by 1913, the idea and term “Whitmanism” existed – obvious and widespread in the US, thanks, in part, to this incomplete list of Whitman friends mentioned above, as well as Dr. Richard Maurice Bucke, John Burroughs, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Anne Gilchrist, Edward Carpenter, and William Douglas O’Connor, Mark Twain, and, also, thanks to yes, his detractors, such as the occasional or very present -depending on the edition of *Leaves of Grass* - newspaper critic and the better known James Harlan and Thomas Wentworth Higginson.<sup>644</sup> But, as Montoliu points out here in his essay, in the French-speaking world as well in, for example, Henri Ghéon’s article, “Le Whitmanisme” in La Nouvelle Revue Française, in 1912.<sup>645</sup>

---

<sup>643</sup> Montoliu, *L’home i sa tasca*, 176.

<sup>644</sup> Giantvalley, Scott. "Strict, Straight Notions of Literary Propriety: Thomas Wentworth Higginson's Gradual Unbending to Walt Whitman." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 4 (Spring 1987), 17-27. [Traces Thomas Wentworth Higginson's gradual evolution from enemy and detractor of Whitman's poetry to seemingly enthusiastic supporter of at least some of Whitman's work; analyzes extracts from Higginson's correspondence regarding Whitman and proposes reasons for the critic's change of heart. Full text available of Whitmanarchive.org. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/bibliography/search.html?keyword=support&year=>.

<sup>645</sup> Montoliu, *L’home i sa tasca*, 177.

What Montoliu finds curious, however, is the following: first of all, that there was at the time so much response in the French culture and not a corresponding or even stronger response in Catalunya, and that there was, moreover, an overall lack of “reception” in Spain, especially given the fact that Whitman seemed to live very presently with this relationship and his work contains many references to the Hispanic world. Montoliu predicts, at the same time, the reaction that these opinions of his might inspire:

*Ja veig l'explosió de revolta que aquestes frases produiràn en les estimables gabies d'or dels nostres neo-clàssics cantaires. Ningú més enamorat que l'autor d'aquestes ratlles de tot el preciós tresor de l'avior greco-llatina que encara pomposament rumbeja en nostres mediterrànies costes. Fantasmes adorables o belles veritats, vestits volanders o còssos palpables, poc importa la qüestió. Els fons ètnic irreductible : heusaquí, en tot cas, una realitat que arreu els fets sonorament proclamen, i que tant més palesa es mostra amb els violents esforços que molts fan per disfreçar-la...*<sup>646</sup>

On the first point, Montoliu says that the French “effort” is admirable, but that:

*...per més que molt probablement estèril en una societat tant sobre-cultivada com la francesa. Benvingut sigui, tant mateix, sobre tot com exemple a transplantar en terres més aposta com les nostres, les de la vella soca ibèrica, i molt particularment Catalunya, ont aquell aspre tast de salvatge rudeses, o si es vol, de primitiva barbarie whitmanià, que tant espanta als exquisits crítics francesos com element inassimilables als llurs refinats paladars...*<sup>647</sup>

On the lack of visible excitement about Whitman’s work in Spain in general, Montoliu points out to the uninitiated reader Whitman’s “hispanofilia” and the ways in which he showed it:

*...qual singular hispanofilia tant sovint campeja en sos escrits, no sols en certes al·lusions i títols de ses poesies, com l'endreqada a « Espanya, 1873-1874 », no sols en el freqüent ús de mots espanyols per tot arreu, sinó, més particularment encara, en l'entusiasme ques sovint demostra per l'antigua cultura i lletres castellanés en diverses notes de sos escrits en prosa...*<sup>648</sup>

Curious to this reader that Montoliu does not speak directly here to translation and translators, and their – his included! – inestimable work in bringing Whitman’s or any other works – any

<sup>646</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 179.

<sup>647</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 178.

<sup>648</sup> Montoliu, *L'home i sa tasca*, 178-9.



literary legacy - into other languages and cultures. Another example of Montoliu's so-called modesty? Why would Montoliu have spent his time translating Ruskin, Emerson and Shakespeare, then Whitman, into Catalan, if he did not think this sharing would mean something? Well-read and observant people like the scholar Francesc Roca think, for instance, that if in Catalunya, Shakespeare's plays to this day are regularly *mises en scène*, and that at this very moment, May 2017, one can see Lluís Homar, under the direction of Xavier Albertí, as *Richard III* at the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya<sup>649</sup> or, in June, Pau Carrió's version of *Hamlet* at the Lliure de Gracia<sup>650</sup>, it is, at the very least, in part, thanks to Montoliu having the forethought (but not, unfortunately, the lifespan) to translate all of plays of the English bard<sup>651</sup>, beginning with his 1907 translation of *Macbeth*.<sup>652</sup> Yes, critical articles on works are important – Martí's and Jorba's articles on Whitman. Bazalgette's book-length reflections on Whitman's life and work, and this, Montoliu's enlightening study on the multi-layered world of Whitman. These authors wrote in an admiring way of Whitman and his work, and the reader of these treatises, in Spanish, Catalan, and French, who happened to also be readers of the English language, could then, curiosity piqued, go and find the work in its original language and see for themselves. But what about the person who had not had such an opportunity to learn English? It is thanks to the translation of Whitman's work between 1855 and 1913 – into German and Italian, then into two of Spain's languages, that the work was gradually disseminated into varying European and Latin American populations, and, it could be argued, has survived, if not thrived, until our day.

### 3.2.2.2.7 Endreça

---

<sup>649</sup> Teatre Nacional de Catalunya, Accessed April 2017. [www.tnc.cat](http://www.tnc.cat).

<sup>650</sup> Teatre Lliure de Gracia. Accessed April 2017. <http://www.teatrelliure.com/es/el-teatre-lliure/donde-estamos/gracia/el-lliure-de-gracia>.

<sup>651</sup> Conversation with Professor Francesc Roca, April 5 2017.

<sup>652</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*. Translated by Cebrià Montoliu. (Barcelona: l'Avenc, 1907).

*...Sense pretendre, doncs, desvirtuar en lo més mínim tant nobles esforços per a continuar en el món l'obra de Whitman, ans al contrari, aplaudint-los de tot cor, nosaltres, donant aquella per finida, contentem-nos amb honorari el seu esperit que de tal modo ha pogut prevaldre contra els embats del temps. Car, si de tot geni en general pot dir-se que, més que ses idees, i teories, és ell mateix, en quant les encarna, lo que per a la posteritat les avalora, a ningú 's pot amb més justesa aplicar tal reflexió que a aquest geni extradordinari, qual immensa capacitat d'absorpció ens el presenta, segons s'ha dit, com el poeta de la personalitat, per excel·lencia.<sup>653</sup>*

As Montoliu stated in his introductory commentary to *L'home i sa tasca*, Montoliu, like many of his predecessors, and as many who would follow would do, puts forth that Whitman is “el poeta de la personalitat, tal es la seva nota characteristic”.<sup>654</sup> But Montoliu is not referring here to some sort of superficial idea of “personality”, but the whole of Whitman. Again, employing the word “absorb”, Montoliu here states that this verb is actually one of the defining ones for Whitman and how he lived his life. He goes on to list then, some of the ways Whitman absorbed, synthesized and integrated varying aspects of life into his own, and thus, *sous-entendu*, why he is the endless fascinating “character” that he is for so many of us in 1913, as in 2017:

*...aquest home excepcional fer fibra de sa carn i sang de ses venes des dels més greus als més frèvols esdeveniments dels séus dies, els encotrats judicis que als séus contemporanis meresquen, totes les idees, sentiments, anhels, esforços i sacrificis dels homes del séu temps, per diversos i oposats que fossin, aixícom distintes les condicions de raca, nació, sexe, ofici, religió, classe i posició social de cadascú....<sup>655</sup>*

For Montoliu, Whitman had enormous capacities for philosophical, as well as physiological receptivity; he confronted all sorts of adversity – troubled family members, financial insecurity, his country at war, nursing the injured and desperate as a result of this war, not to mention mockery and mesquinery on the public stage - with steady equanimity; he held his social and political convictions close to the chest, fought for them, sacrificed for them, and, of course,

---

<sup>653</sup> Montoliu, Cebrià. *L'home i sa tasca*. (Barcelona: Societat Catalana d'Edicions, 1913), 182-3.

<sup>654</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 15.

<sup>655</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 183-4.

maintained his vision of poetry and his place within it until his death; this Social Poet, who “sospira l’humanitat”<sup>656</sup> lived “com un home entre ‘ls homes”<sup>657</sup> was, not surprisingly, a friend, and able to make and enjoy an incredible circle of friends around him throughout his life, living compassionately alongside them their earthly sorrows and joys, while also offering them through his magical words, the profound divine nature that reigns in each one of us.<sup>658</sup> Whitman was able to show others the wonder of the world through the example of:

*vivint actualment l’ideal existencia que en sos poemes canta, I essent, en pura veritat, tant o mes que’l poeta dels seus cants, el ver “poeta de sa propia vida.”*<sup>659</sup>

In the preface to his 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman puts forth ideas on the poet, never saying “national poet”, nor ever saying “social poet”, despite the fact that it does seem as if he is talking about both, or that they are one and the same. “The American bards shall be marked by generosity and affection and for encouraging competitors...They shall be kosmos...without monopoly or secrecy”.<sup>660</sup> The American bard shall delineate no class of persons, nor one or two out of the strata of interests, nor love most nor truth most, nor the soul most, nor the body most—and not be for the eastern states more than the western, or the northern states more than the southern”.<sup>661</sup> And, finally, and famously (and here we are again, back to “absorb”): “The proof of the poet is that his country absorbs him as affectionately as he has absorbed it”.<sup>662</sup>

---

<sup>656</sup> Montoliu. *L’home i sa tasca*, 185.

<sup>657</sup> Montoliu. *L’home i sa tasca*, 185.

<sup>658</sup> Montoliu. *L’home i sa tasca*, 184-5.

<sup>659</sup> Montoliu. *L’home i sa tasca*, 185.

<sup>660</sup> Whitman, Walt, *Leaves of Grass*, preface, 1855. 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition. (New York: Penguin Classics, 2005), 15.

<sup>661</sup> Whitman, Walt, *Leaves of Grass*, preface, 1855, 15.

<sup>662</sup> Whitman, Walt, *Leaves of Grass*, preface, 1855, 27.

On the prickly question of the idea of a “National Poet”<sup>663</sup> and if such a person can actually exist, and hold meaning, Montoliu says that Whitman provides a monumental ideal for US citizens:

*...--visió que humilment me permeto brindar al poderós poble americà per si algú dia, deturant-se en la fatal pendent de sa denunciada apostasia als vers ideals democràtics, pren esment de reparar l'injust descuit en què, com a poble al menys, sembla tenir la memoria del seu poeta nacional, l'únic que realment fins ara pugui aspirara títol tant honorós, ja que amb tant alt sentit i tant poderós verb aconseguí enlairtat en una sola bandera els més íntims i nobles ideals de la seva raça.*<sup>664</sup>

Montoliu turns his synthesizing attention now to Whitman's work. Fittingly, he speaks to what he sees as a broad and profound and profoundly intriguing contradiction in the poet's work. He is referring to what he sees in both the form and content of Whitman's poetry, that is, the echoes one finds in Whitman's work from ancient works,

*“ja quasi oblidats per la raça humana en son incessant progress; lo qual, quand menys en aparença, no deixa d'oferir un xocant contrast amb la moderna ambició de modernitat, que és, per lo vist, una de les principals caraterístiques de la mateixa obra.*<sup>665</sup>

Whitman's poetry, Montoliu continues, contains common notes and the passion of Wagner's music and other « ultramodernistes », and, concurrently, as Jannaccone “perfectly” argues:

*...tots els characters que presenten els poemes de les primers albaides de la civilitat, no sols per la reproducció de formes rítmiques primitives que hem indicat, sinó, molt particularment, per sa pretensió o tendència a oferir-se alhora com llubre sagrat, teogoniv o cosmogonic, codi moral i poema líric, de tal maerna que, així com el nou mon ha reproduit formes primitives econòmiques i sicoals, tambe devia, quan el temps fos mardu, reproduir les formes primitives de l'art.*<sup>666</sup>

Here, Montoliu backs up a bit to delineate modes of poetry leading up to Whitman's. He says that the first period includes works such as the Rig-Veda, el Bhagavada-Gita and the Bible.<sup>667</sup>

---

<sup>663</sup> See William Douglas O'Connor's essay, “The Good Grey Poet: A Vindication” in the Appendix 4 of this dissertation.

<sup>664</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 186.

<sup>665</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 188.

<sup>666</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 188-9.

<sup>667</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 189.

These works are great metaphysical poems, offering the reader colorful and deep and melancholic visions of existence.<sup>668</sup> Parmenides, Heraclitus and Plato were poets in the way, but they were also savants, as was Lucretius.<sup>669</sup> At this point in time, a temporary cleavage develops between the “savants”, intellectuals, and the “poets”, those sensitive, emotionally-focused creatures, two worlds eventually brought back together, that is, if we remember that, at its root, the word “poet” means to create, we can say that the poet is a creator of images, but, also, and often at the same time, a creator, or *evocateur* of ideas, and, through ideas, emotions.<sup>670</sup>

This is all nicely laid-out and understandable. Then Whitman comes along. How does the critic communicate “l’absolut oblit o desconeixement de l’obra de Whitman que rumbeja en l’altrement admirable llibre d’ont procedeix l’anterior cita”?<sup>671</sup> Even worse, the critic keeps in mind that not only did the poetry Whitman composed in his time resonate with a Herculean force “l’hora d’aquell ansiat retorn del cicle evolutiu de la poesia”<sup>672</sup>, but his prose, too, “havia formulat del modo mes retumbant i categòric idèntiques perspectives”<sup>673</sup>. Whitman in

#### Democratic Vistas:

*...jo dic que, per als futures i democratic designis, han d’aparèixer poetes (gostaré dir-ho?) de més alta inspiració encara que qualsevol d’aquells, -- poetes no sols posseïts del religiós foc i abandon d’Isaïes, de l’exuberant geni epic d’Homer, o dels profunds caràcters de Shakespeare, sinó coexistent amb les fórmules Hegelianes i amb la ciència moderna.*<sup>674</sup>

For his own land, and the world, Whitman believes:

*L’Amèrica necessita, i el món necessita, una mena de bards que vulguin, un cop per sempre, de tal modo enllaçar i concordar el ser físic i racional de l’home amb els*

---

<sup>668</sup> Montoliu. *L’home i sa tasca*, 189.

<sup>669</sup> Montoliu. *L’home i sa tasca*, 189.

<sup>670</sup> Montoliu. *L’home i sa tasca*, 190.

<sup>671</sup> Montoliu. *L’home i sa tasca*, 190.

<sup>672</sup> Montoliu. *L’home i sa tasca*, 190.

<sup>673</sup> Montoliu. *L’home i sa tasca*, 190-1.

<sup>674</sup> Montoliu. *L’home i sa tasca*, 191.

*conjunts sel temps i de l'espai, i amb el vast multiforme espectacle de la Natura que'l circumda, - tantalitzant-lo sens treva, i l'ensem formant part, anc que sense ésser part, d'ell, -- que, d'un modo essencial, harmònic, satisfacin i procurin repòs.*<sup>675</sup>

And, in the end, from now on:

*Llavors confrontarà l'home la Natura, i confrontarà el temps i l'espai, uns i altres amb la ciencia i, « con amore », ocuparà ell son propi lloc, disposat per a la vida, amo la fortuna i de l'infortuni. I llavors, s'obtindrà provisó d'allò que tant de temps ha fet falta, i tindrà un àncora el vaixell, que no la tingué abans en totes ses travessies.*<sup>676</sup>

In Montoliu's opinion, Whitman's work marks "el principi de la fi d'un gran cicle evolutiu" and Whitman himself says as such.<sup>677</sup> The idea is that, through this evolutionary process, all that had proceeded him, all those centuries of accumulated experience, was transformed, in an increasingly apparent way, into a new and superior synthesis.<sup>678</sup> Montoliu points to his own ebullient, if not revolutionary times, as an example of this change-over from an older order to a newer one: "I si mes de una vegada en aquests darrers temps hem degut senyalar a la general atencio marcats indici de aquest canvi de rua en les grans corrents ideals contemporanies...".<sup>679</sup> Montoliu suggests that, as a sign of how Whitman has, on his "suprema mission reintegradora", absorbed from past material and spiritual life, and has taken in hand the relay from, in part, Lucretius' (99 BC to 55 BC) poem, *Of the Nature of Things*, we could call Whitman's chef d'oeuvre, *Of the Spirit of Things*.<sup>680</sup> And, as time continues on, without precipitation, we can recognize that Whitman, "vida i obra consagrada en aital vot, integralment poètica, per fi, sa noble tasca pot esperar serena l'acord del món conscient..."<sup>681</sup>

---

<sup>675</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 191-2.

<sup>676</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 192.

<sup>677</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 192.

<sup>678</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 193.

<sup>679</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 193.

<sup>680</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 194.

<sup>681</sup> Montoliu. *L'home i sa tasca*, 195.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

##### Conclusions & Research to Come

In this thesis, I have attempted to discover, as the case may be, describe and analyze the lives and works of Walt Whitman and Cebrià Montoliu, and how the contexts in which they lived – mid-19<sup>th</sup> c. United States and the early 1900's in Catalunya - had them in a fruitful interchange of at once being affected by and affecting their environments. Both periods of time were eras of tremendous growth and change: from mercantile economies to ones based more and more on national and international capitalism; from the sometimes related flight from rural areas to the rapidly expanding cities, be they Brooklyn or Barcelona; a concurrent interest in the rights of the working class, and where this part of the population fit into the scheme of this new reality, both in terms of the potential benefits that technology could bring them and their communities, such as improved hygiene and resources like electricity, as well as its possible abuses in cookie-cutter profit-centered factories and their pollution of the environment and detriment to public health. There were then, as now, contradictions: tremendous positive change in the present for some and hope for the future for many, but also, for example, a poverty that for the first time could leave one stuck in unsafe city or on the outskirts-of-the-city housing, at best, or homeless, at worst.

As we saw in both Whitman's and Montoliu's worlds, the respective political spheres were at a crucial stage: questions of the end of slavery, or not, in the US, Catalan independence or not, translating into, from some perspectives, the breaking up of countries. There was also active jockeying for a stable if not powerful place in these new worlds. Both Whitman and Montoliu were engaged in the struggles of their day. Whitman, a teacher, then journalist and editor, used his positions to advocate for his political beliefs. Montoliu, journalist, editor, and founder of a number of publications and organizations, was a constant presence in Barcelona political conversations and circles. Both gave lectures. Both understood that these new developments needed to be disseminated, by the written or spoken word. Both were ahead of their time in their concern for the environment: Whitman fought for Fort Green park, a green space in Brooklyn that exists until this day; Montoliu, of course, as the committed *urbanista* held as a primary importance the *ciutat jardí* as a sane and necessary stance against unchecked real estate development and the taking over of parks and community spaces for more buildings. In 1849, when cholera struck New York again, Whitman was concerned for the inhabitants of Brooklyn and wrote an article on the need for pure water to be supplied by the city, as Montoliu's father had written an article on the not only clean but free and just access to water in Tarragona.

In terms of their respective families, does it matter that Whitman had close relationships with his family, while we do not know if Montoliu did, and furthermore, I do not have enough information on Montoliu and the personal relationships he could have had with his family. Was Montoliu rejected by them (or Catalan society) because he went away (and did not come back)? Because he did not adhere to the Catholic faith in which he was raised? Because he lived with a his partner without being married to her? Did his more socially and politically conservative and



famous literary critic brother Manuel, have a good relationship with him, or did he not have any relationship are all with him? It is surprising to me that they traveled in somewhat of the same circles, at least for a few adult years, but there is not more record of them in other articles or the memoirs I have read. In a book that reveals some of the family, Manuel's own *Memorias*, we do find some mention of Cebrià, but not that much, certainly not about his professional adult life. Manuel spends more time, however, on his brother Francesc: his personality even as a child, his adult trajectory, his early death. Manuel also spends time, not on his sister per se, but explicating one of the poems found in her poetry collection.

In 1855, Whitman would self-publish *Leaves of Grass* and the world of poetry would be forever transformed. Equally lauded and vilified, the book was famously hailed by Ralph Waldo Emerson and we would see six renditions of it from 1855 to 1892. It is fifteen years after the publication of this final edition, and the death of the poet, that in 1909, Montoliu, would publish his translations of twenty-three of Whitman's poems into Catalan. This collection, *Fulles d'Herba*, did not have the same repercussions as its source document, but yet, it was not until the second half of the century that there were any significant amount of Catalan translations of Whitman, and not until the 21<sup>st</sup> c., 2014, that is, more than 100 years after Montoliu's translation, that there was a complete translation of *Leaves of Grass*. Montoliu was no poet, and, claims, as a translator, to prefer to err on the literal side of a text. Was his translation considered passable and informative? Or was there no interest in either his translation or Whitman? If translation is a literary genre in itself, did Montoliu help to reshape his national literature, or as perhaps what he was really aiming for, its social and cultural outlooks, as he was, in my opinion, based on what I have learned of his life, his viewpoints, his actions, including the array of authors he chose to

work on, a *translator activist*, and although literary concerns made up part of his priorities in who to translate, authors like Ruskin, Emerson and Whitman all had a democratic perspective, akin to Montoliu's.

A disappointment in my research is that the court seems to be still deliberating on the point of the quality of Montoliu's translation. I read and heard many writers and/or translators, Pons Alorda being apart from this crowd, who say, yes, they had read the Montoliu translations. And that is it. Moreover, I did not find, in time for this dissertation, a review of Montoliu translation, or translations, for that matter, in any of the publications I combed. Had he stayed in Catalunya, and not gone to live and work in the US, would he have been felt as more present and thus been able to either promote his translation himself, or find someone else, like his brother or Eugeni d'Ors to do it for him? I, for one, as someone far from fluent in Catalan, cannot evaluate the overall quality of Montoliu's translation, from a literary standpoint, and remain dependent on these opinions of others, whether they be in print or in conversation, from today, or 100 years ago.

In this same vein, but in a more general sense as well, had Montoliu stayed closer to "home", would we all know more about him today? Or did he live out the oft' fate of a jack of all trades and fall into almost invisibility because he was master of no trades – or was he so multi-faceted, and good at much of it, that no one could keep up with him?

Four years after publishing this translation of Whitman's poems, Montoliu wrote a critical work on Whitman's oeuvre: *L'home i sa tasca*. What was the objective of this critical essay? In this essay, Montoliu's appreciation of Whitman, both of the man and the work, as Montoliu's title indicates, is obvious. Already we know that the essay is "a continuation" to the introduction that accompanied Montoliu's translations of the poems from *Leaves of Grass*. He says as much in the

introduction to his study. Montoliu wrote enlightening and lengthy introductions to his translations of Ruskin and Emerson. This is something he did. He did not, however, go on to write book-length essays on him. It is interesting that here, too, there has been little formal critical reaction to this essay. It is a quality essay, so again, why? For some of the reasons listed above for his translation - lack of interest in all things Whitman, or Montoliu? As I mention below under the following heading “Future work”, there is the intriguing fact that Montoliu’s study was not translated into Spanish until 1943 – and, not in Spain, but in Argentina. Why would this be? Due to a stronger interest in Whitman in Argentina; Spain’s Catalan and non-Catalan politics; the dictatorship of Franco; the perceived lack of importance of Montoliu’s work, or of Whitman’s? Or is it, as the adage goes, *Nul n’est prophète en son pays?*

#### Research to Come

I am convinced there is more to be uncovered here about Cebrià de Montoliu, in terms of both his personal and professional life. I do not have enough information for my tastes, in short. Can more to be found, for instance, in Palma de Mallorca, Montoliu’s birthplace? I was able to do quite a bit of research in Tarragona and Barcelona, but not in Mallorca. Is there more to find out about the family’s stay in Mallorca, about the household there and about the mother’s side of the family and background? Manuel’s *Memorias*, for example, hardly gives a thought to his mother’s side of the family. What can be filled into this story by looking at the history of both sides of the Montoliu y de Togores family? I feel that this *on the ground* research is quite effective, not to mention enjoyable.

A question I kept asking as I worked through this project was: where are the letters? I think of the insight I have gathered from the letters between Miguel de Unamuno and Joan Maragall in the first decade of the 20th c. The letters to de Sucre, in a third party's collection, not part of de Sucre's or Montoliu's possessions, came to me later in my research – and they are priceless for the historical sense of being right there and for the concerns and relationship one can see in them, especially since there are more than one to the same person. Would we ever know that Montoliu wanted, quite impatiently, to meet Fiske Warren if we had not these letters? It was very typical, as we all know, to write letters in that era. We have learned so much about Whitman, his family, his friends, his times, from his letters. Did Montoliu never write to his family members? I repeat: where are the letters?

There are still more magazines from the era to go through. For instance, there are regular articles in Poble Catala, signed by “CM” or “C Montoliu”, often focused on workers or education, as well as by his brother, writing not only on literary affairs, but on, in one issue, the importance of women's education and their equal worth in society; there are articles by d'Ors...the list goes on. In terms of general Catalan history, there was also the curious full page dedicate every issue to a “Friend of Catalunya”, often a mover and shaker, a word I used at the beginning of this dissertation, from another country. This magazine, then, is something I look forward to delving further into.

Is there information to be culled as well from documents in the European capitals Montoliu visited for his interaction with and information-gathering with his colleagues in the urban planning sector? And what of his mysterious Harvard Spanish Book Institute? And his time in Fairhope? Are there records at the Organic School or in the library or City Hall that have not been digitalized? Is there more to learn in Kansas City or Albuquerque?

With the information I have already gathered and that that I hope to discover, could I write a biography on Montoliu?

Getting back to magazines of the era, I believe a comparative analysis of each magazine's manifesto - often taking up the full page of the inside cover - could be a way of understanding the era better – from the overarching efforts towards Catalan independence, to the specific circles of influence and struggle found therein.

I would also like to start translating parts of Montoliu's study on Whitman, into English, with a view to translating the complete work. I think it is that important. This question if its translation brings me to another intriguing fact: his study was not translated into Spanish until 1943 – and in Argentina. Why? Spain's Catalan and non-Catalan politics, the dictatorship of Franco, the perceived lack of importance of Montoliu's work, or of Whitman's?

One more note, and not to overstate the obvious, my future work most certainly involves becoming fluent in *Català* –

### *Bibliography*

Abrams, Sam, ed., *The Neglected Walt Whitman: Vital Texts*. (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1993).

**Abrams, D. Sam. "La «Rapsòdia d'Ahab»: una divergència entre Melville i Bartra" *Faig* núm. 30 (1988).**

**Abrams, D. Sam. "L'obra de Bartra a l'exili mexicà", *Diari de Barcelona* (06/01/90).**

Abrams, D. Sam, curator. *Poesia anglesa i nord-americana contemporània: Antologia*. (Barcelona, Edicions 62, 1994).

Allen, Gay Wilson and Folsom, Ed, (Ed). *Walt Whitman and the World*. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1995).

Ambroggio, Luis Alberto. *Todos Somos Whitman*. (Madrid: Vaso Roto Ediciones, 2014).

- Andújar, Manuel. *La Literatura Catalana en el destierro*. (Mexico, 1949).
- Antología Lírica de Gracia. (Barcelona: Torrel de Reus, 1950). Prólogo de Sucre, J.M.
- Asselineau, Roger. "My Discovery and Exploration of the Whitman Continent (1941-1991)". *Walt Whitman Quarterly*, Volume 9, Number 1(Summer 1991), 15-23.
- Asselineau, Roger, "Whitman in Italy". *Walt Whitman and the World*, (Iowa City: Iowa University Press, 1995), 264-281.
- Ateneo Barcelonés. *Anuari del Ateneo Barcelonés Any 1902*. (Barcelona: Ateneo Barcelonés, 1902).
- Athenot, Éric and Blake Bronson-Bartlett. "Whitman futur, ou l'avenir à venir: "Poets to Come" in French Translation." *The Walt Whitman Archive*. 2012. Accessed March 2, 2017. <http://whitmanarchive.org/published/foreign/poets/french/intro.html>.
- Bain, Mildred. *Horace Traubel*. (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1913).
- Bacardi, Monserrat. « Una dona amb amolts braços? ». *Serra D'or* (Barcelona : Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, ed Març 2004 Num531, 2004), 19.
- Barnstone, Willis, *The Poetics of Translation: History, Theory, Practice*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).
- Barrillon , J. « La V exposición de los artistas gracienses » . (Barcelona: Gracias). Prólogo de Sucre.
- Barrus, Clara. *Whitman and Burroughs, Comrades*. (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1931).
- . *Notes on Walt Whitman as Poet and Person*. (New York: American News, 1867).
- . "The Poet of the Cosmos." *Accepting the Universe. By Burroughs*. (New York: Wise, 1924).
- Bartra, Augustí. *Haikus d'Arsinal*. (Andorra: Editorial Andorra, 2010), Pròleg D Sam Abrams.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Dos poètes a Nova York: Hart Crane I Garcia Lorca*. (Ajuntament de Terrasse, 1998).
- \_\_\_\_\_. Bartra, A. and Fuster Ortells, J., *Correspondència*. (Valencia: Eliseu Climent, 1998).
- Bazalgette, Léon-
- Whitman, Walt. *Calamus. Poèmes. Version nouvelle de Léon Bazalgette. Avec 10 bois hors-texte dessinés et gravés par Frans Masereel*. Translated by Léon Bazalgette. (Genève. 1919).

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Feuilles d'herbe. Traduction intégrale d'après l'édition définitive par Léon Bazalgette. Avec deux portraits de l'auteur.* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1909).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Le penseur de plaies: poèmes, lettres & fragments de Walt Whitman sur la guerre.* (Paris: Edition de la Revue littéraire des primaires "Les humbles", 1917).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Poèmes de Walt Whitman.* (Paris: Éditions de l'Effort libre, F. Rieder & cie. 1914).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Whitman, A Study.* 1896. (St. Clair Shores, Michigan: Scholarly, 1970).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Le poème évangile de Walt Whitman.* (Paris: Mercure de France. 1921).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Walt Whitman: L'Homme et son œuvre.* (1920).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Walt Whitman: L'Homme et son oeuvre.* (Paris: Mercure de France. 1926).
- Balseiro, José A. "Emerson y Whitman", *Atlantico Revista de Cultura Contemporánea* . (Madrid: Casa America, No 2 1956 junio), 49-71.
- Blasian, Lucia. *Sans rime ni raison.* ("Madame C de Montoliu") (Los Angeles: Times Mirror Press, 1942).
- Blodgett, Harold William. *Walt Whitman in England.* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1973).
- Bucke, Richard Maurice. *Calamus: A Series of Letters Written During the Years 1868—1880 by Walt Whitman to a Young Friend (Peter Doyle).* (Boston: Laurens Maynard, 1897).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study of the Evolution of the Human Mind.* 1901. (New York: Dutton, 1969).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Man's Moral Nature: An Essay.* (New York. Putnam's, 1879).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Richard Maurice Bucke, Medical Mystic: Letters of Dr. Bucke to Walt Whitman and His Friends.* Ed. Artem Lozynsky. (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1977).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Walt Whitman.* 1883. (New York: Gordon, 1972).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Wound Dresser: A Series of Letters Written from the Hospitals of Washington.* (Boston: Small, Maynard, 1898).
- Burroughs, John. "Two Critics on Walt Whitman," *Conservator* 6 (1895): 84.
- Camboni, Marina. "Italian Translations of 'Poets to Come.'" The Walt Whitman Archive, whitmanarchive.org, 2012. [Examines all the published Italian translations of "Poets to Come" from 1886 to the present; offers background on the translators; and analyzes the cultural and poetic significance of the variations in the translations.]

Catasús, Aleix, and Bernat Puigdollers. *El Noucentisme a Barcelona*. (Barcelona, Àmbit, 2016).

Cohen, Matt, Nicole Gray, and Rey Rocha. “‘Poets to Come’: An Introduction to the Spanish Translations.” Walt Whitman Archive, whitmanarchive.org, 2012. [Examines eleven published Spanish translations of “Poets to Come” from 1953 to the present; offers background on the translators; and analyzes the cultural and poetic significance of the variations in the translations.]

Costa, Josep. *Walt Whitman: Càlam / Calamus*. On the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Walt Whitman. (Barcelona: Institut d’Estudis Nord-americans, March 30-April 2, 1992).

Costelloe, Mary Smith Whitall. "Walt Whitman at Camden. By One who has been there" 23 December 1886 *Pall Mall Gazette*. Note: After the death of Anne Gilchrist, Whitman termed her his "staunchest living woman friend" (*Correspondence* 4:89). She had written: You cannot really understand America without Walt Whitman, without *Leaves of Grass*... He has expressed that civilization, 'up to date,' as he would say, and no student of the philosophy of history can do without him”.

Coyne, James H. *Richard Maurice Bucke: A Sketch*. Rev. ed. (Toronto: Saunders, 1923).  
Crasemann Collins, Christiane. “Cebrià Montoliu (1873-1923), Interpreter of Modern Urbanism” *Aportacions catalanes en el camp de la urbanista i de l’ordenació del territori, des de Cerdà als nostres dies*. (Barcelona: Societat Catalana d’Ordenació del Territori, filial de l’Institut d’Estudis Catalans, March 2017), 372-387.

Creeley, Robert. *A la Terra*. Translated by Dolors Udina. (Vic: Eumo Editorial, 2013).

Denison, Flora MacDonald. "A Dedication and a Death." *Walt Whitman's Canada*. Ed. Cyril Greenland and John Robert Colombo. (Willowdale, Ontario: Hounslow, 1992), 196-200.

Derrida, Jacques. *Otobiografias*, Amorrortu editores, 2009 (or., *Otobiographies. L'enseignement de Nietzsche*, 1984 y 2005).

Desclots, Miguel. Introduction and Translator, along with Augustí Bartra. *Cant de mi mateix*. (Vic: Eumo/Edipoies, 1985).

Dickinson. “American Poetry in the age of Whitman and Dickinson”. Accessed February 2016. <https://ampoarchive.wordpress.com/2009/02/20/pavese-whitman/>

Enzo Giachino, Preface to *Foglie d'erba*, translated by Enzo Giachino (Torino: Einaudi, 1993).  
Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *La confiança en sí mateix. L'amistat*. Translated by Montoliu, Cebrià. (Barcelona: L’Avenç, 1904).

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. “The Poet”. In *Essays: Second Series*. 1844.



Englekirk, John E. "Notes on Whitman in Spanish America." Hispanic Review: the quarterly journal devoted to research in the Hispanic Languages and Literatures. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, Vol. VI, No. 2, April 1938):133-38.

Englekirk, John E. "Translations of Walt Whitman." *Revista Moderna*, 1901.  
<http://www.worldcat.org/title/traduccion-de-balbino-davalos-en-la-revista-moderna/oclc/860388845>

Englekirk, John E. "Whitman en Castellano". Atlantico: Revista de Cultura Contemporánea, (Madrid: Casa America de Madrid, 2 1956).

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

Ferrier, Ute. "Walt Whitman's Influence on Germany". Binghamton.edu. Accessed February 2017. <https://www.binghamton.edu/history/resources/journal-of-history/whitman.html>.

Foster, Robert F. *W.B. Yeats / The Arch-Poet, 1915-1939*. (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003).

Freedman, Florence Bernstein. *Williams Douglas O'Connor: Walt Whitman's Chosen Knight*. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1985).

———. *W. B. Yeats: A Life, The Apprentice Mage: 1865-1914*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Luigi Gamberale-

Walt Whitman, *Canti scelti di Walt Whitman*, 2 volumes, translated by Luigi Gamberale (Milano: Sonzogno, 1890);

Walt Whitman, *Foglie di erba: con le due aggiunte e gli Echi della vecchiaia dell'edizione del 1900*, translated by Luigi Gamberale (Milano: R. Sandron, 1907).

Walt Whitman, *Foglie di erba: con le due aggiunte e gli Echi della vecchiaia dell'edizione del 1900*, 2 volumes, seconda edizione riveduta, versione di Luigi Gamberale (Milano: R. Sandron, 1923).

García. "Walt Whitman y Unamuno", *Atlantico Revista de Cultura Contemporánea*. (Madrid: Casa America, No 2, 1956 junio), 5-47.

Giantvalley, Scott. "Strict, Straight Notions of Literary Propriety: Thomas Wentworth Higginson's Gradual Unbending to Walt Whitman." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 4 (Spring 1987), 17-27. <https://doi.org/10.13008/2153-3695.1149>.

Gilchrist Anne. "A Woman's Estimate of Walt Whitman". *Boston Radical: A Unitarian Magazine*, May 1870, 345-59.

Gonzalez de la Garza, Mauricio. *Walt Whitman : racista, imperialista, antimexicano*. (Mexico City : Coleccions de Malaga, 1971).

*Europe : Revue littéraire mensuelle* : Walt Whitman. (Jean-Claude Grumberg et Paul de Roux, eds. 89ième année, N.990, Octobre 2011).

Grünzweig, Walter. "Walt Whitman's Influence on Germany". The Walt Whitman Archive. <http://www.123helpme.com/view.asp?id=41519>

Harned, Thomas B., ed. *The Letters of Anne Gilchrist & Walt Whitman*. (Garden City New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1918). <http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924013457910>.

Hartley, Conrad L. *The Spirit of Walt Whitman (A Psychological Study in Blank Verse.)* (St. Ann's Squaeb, Manchester: J. E. Cornish Ltd, 1908).  
Source: <http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924022223303>

Howard, Ebenezer. *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*. (London: S. Sonnenschein & Co., Ltd. 1902).

Iser, Wolfgang. *The Implied Reader*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974).  
Jauss, Hans-Robert. *Experiencia estética y hermenéutica literaria*, Madrid, Taurus, 1986 (tr. parcial del or. *Ästhetische Erfahrung und literarische Hermeneutik* 1977).

Jaffe, Harold. "Bucke's Walt Whitman: A Collaboration." *Walt Whitman Review* 15 (1969).  
Jannaccone, Pasquale. *La poesia di Walt Whitman e l'evoluzione delle forme ritmiche* (Torino : Frassati, 1898). Archive.org. Accessed June 2016. <https://archive.org/details/lpoesidiwaltwhit00janniala>

Jauss, Hans-Robert. *La literatura como provocación*, (Barcelona: Península, 1976  
or *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft*, 1967).

Jorba, Pérez J. « Walt Whitman ». (Catalònia, February 10, 1900, Barcelona, 52-54).

Kaiser, A. "Cebrià de Montoliu: A Catalan Urban Planner's translation of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*". Paper presented at the Transatlantic Walt Whitman Symposium, Bamberg, Germany 2014.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Strange Bedfellows: Whitman, Emerson and Yeats on the question of a "National Poet"". Paper presented at the Transatlantic Walt Whitman Symposium, Exeter, England, 2016.

Kantrowitz, Arnie. "Carpenter, Edward [1844-1929]." *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia*. Edited by J.R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998). [http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry\\_12.html](http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry_12.html).

Karbeiner, Karen. "Brooklyn and Manhattan". *Walt Whitman in Context* (ed. Joanna Levin and Ed Whitley, Cambridge UP, 2018).

Kaplan, Justin. *Walt Whitman: A Life*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980).

Karsner, David. *Horace Traubel: His Life and Work*. (New York: Egmont Arens, 1919).

———. *Collecta*. (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1914).

———. "Introduction." *Leaves of Grass and Democratic Vistas*. Walt Whitman. (London: Dent, 1912. vii-xiii).

———. *Optimos*. (New York: B.W. Huebsch, 1919).

———. *With Walt Whitman in Camden*. 9 vols. Vols. 1-3. 1906-1914. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1961; Vol. 4. Ed. Sculley Bradley. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1953; Vol. 5. Ed. Gertrude Traubel. Carbondale: U of Southern Illinois P, 1964; Vol. 6. Ed. Gertrude Traubel and William White. Carbondale: U of Southern Illinois P, 1982; Vol. 7. Ed. Jeanne Chapman and Robert Maclsaac. Carbondale: U of Southern Illinois P, 1992; Vols. 8-9. Ed. Jeanned Chapman and Robert Maclsaac. Oregon House, Calif.: W.L. Bentley, 1996.

Krieg, Joann P. *Walt Whitman and the Irish*. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000). Accessed March 2, 2017. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/anc.00160.html>.

Lanera, Juan José, Fernández, Secundino E. Villoria Andreu, Secundino Villoria. *Literatura en Traducción*. Universidad de León, 1995.

Lauritsen, John and Thorstad, David. *Los Primeros Movimientos en favour de los derechos homosexuales: 1864-1935*. Translated by Francesc Parcerias. Prólogo, *Palabras decisivas*, Juan Gil-Albert. (Barcelona: Tusquets, 1974).

Loving, Jerome. *Walt Whitman's Champion: William Douglas O'Connor*. (College Station: Texas A&M UP, 1978).

Lott, Dashae E. "William Douglas O'Connor." *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia*. Edited by J.R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings. New York: Garland Publishing, 1998. Accessed March 2, 2017. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/oconnor/biography/anc.00251.html>.

Marco, Josep. *El fil d'Ariadna: Anàlisi estilística i traducció literària*. (Vic : Eumo Editorial, 2002).

Martí, José. "El poeta Walt Whitman", El Partido Liberal, 1887.

McCain, Rea. *Italica*, Vol 20, No.1 (Mar 1943), 4-16. American Association of Teachers of Italian. DOI 10.2307.476681.

- Merrill, Stuart, Mathew B. Brady, Albert Sterner, Edmund H. Garrett, and Gustave Percival Wiksell. *Walt Whitman (à Léon Bazalgette): with two portraits*. Toronto, Canada: Henry S. Saunders. 1922.
- Montoliu. *El Castell del lloc del Morell: Aspectes historics i de la restauracio del casal dels Montoliu*. Directo i Coordinacio: Valldosera i Cata & Granell i March, Jordi Ed: Ajuntament del Morell 1778-1994.
- Montoliu y de Togores, Cipriano. *Institucions de cultura social: conferencies donades al Institut Obrer Catalá*. (Barcelona: Tip. L'Avenç. 1903).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *L'activitat internacional en materia d'habitació i construcció cívica durant l'any 1913*. (Barcelona, 1915).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *La ciudad-jardín*. (Barcelona: Emilio Gabanach, 1912).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *La cooperación en el movimiento de las ciudades jardines*. (Barcelona: Sociedad Cívica, la Ciudad Jardín. 1913).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Las modernas ciudades y sus problemas á la luz de la Exposición de contrucción cívica de Berlin (1910) con un apéndice sobre otros certámenes análogos*. (Barcelona: Sociedad cívica [de] la ciudad jardín. 1913).
- \_\_\_\_\_. « El Sistema de Taylor y su crítica » : trabajo publicado en el tomo XII de la revista Estudio correspondiente al cuarto trimestre de 1915. (Barcelona: Estudio, 1916).
- \_\_\_\_\_. Civitas : Butlleti de propaganda de la Ciutat Jardí. (Barcelona :Societat Cívica la Ciutat Jardí, 1914-[1924? (Barcelona) : Altés Impr.)Trimestral Año 1, no. 1 (marzo 1914)-vol. 2, no. 18 (jun. 1919); època 2, núm. 1 (juny 1920).
- \_\_\_\_\_. “L’obra d’en Montoliu a Amèrica: urbanització de Fairhope per al seu desenrotllo com a Ciutat Orgànica : Butlletí de la Societat Cívica la Ciutat Jardí, Època II, no. 6, octubre 1921, 5-8.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Fairhope – A Town-Planning Scheme for its Development into an Organic City*. The American City (New York, vol.24, no.4, April 1921), 359.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Walt Whitman”, (La Lectura, Vol 11, N. 2, 1911).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Walt Whitman, L'home i sa tasca*. (Barcelona: Societat Catalana d'Edicions, 1913). <http://books.google.com/books?id=S3g7AQAAMAAJ>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Montoliu y de Togores, Cipriano, and Ramón Escarrá. *Walt Whitman, el hombre y su obra*. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Poseidón. 1943).

Montoliu de, Manuel. *Memorias de Infancia y Adolescencia* (Tarragona: Instituto de Estudios Tarraconenses “Ramon Berenguer IV”, 1958).

Montoliu y de Togores Maria del Pilar. *Ecos del Alma*. (Barcelona: Ed. Eudaldo Puig, 1889).  
Ixart y de Moragas, José. *Estudio biográfico del Excmo. Sr. D. Plácido- María de Montoliú y de Sarriera, Marqués de Montoliu.*, (s.n. Fecha de pub.:1946).

Moret, Xavier. *Dr. Pearson: L'home que va portar la llum a Catalunya*. Premi 23 d'abril 2004. (Barcelona: Columna, 2004).

Murià, Anna. *Crònica de la vida d'Augustí Bartra*. (Barcelona: Editorial Pòrtic, 1967).

\_\_\_\_\_. Murià, Anna. *L'obra de Bartra: assaig d'aproximació*, (Barcelona: Editorial Vosgos, S.A., 1975) A Murià proposes subjective and passionate analysis of ABartra's work.

O'Connor, William Douglas. “*The Good Gray Poet: A Vindication*”. (New York: Bunce and Huntington, 1866).

Ochoa de Eribe Urdinguio, Ma. Ángeles. *Walt Whitman en España recepción de su poética, 1900-1960*, (Bilbao: Universidad de Deusto, 1993).

Olive, Enric, Pique, Jordi and Xavier Ricoma, F. *Tarragona La Imatge i el Temps*. (Ajuntament de Tarragona, Feb1990).

Palau, Esperanza Martínez, Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico: Facultad de Filosofia y Letras, Maestra en Letras Hispanicas : « Augustí Bartra en Mexico ». (Mexico, DF, 1989).  
Parcerisas, Francesc. *Traducció, edició, ideologia* (Translation, Edition, Ideology - 2009)  
Francesc Parcerisas. *Traducció, edició, ideologia. Aspectes sociològics de les traduccions de La Bíblia i de L'Odissea al català*. (Vic: Eumo Editorial, 2009), 276.  
Parcerisas, Francesc. *Sense mans. Metàfores i papers sobre la traducció* (Hands Free. Metaphors and Papers on Translation), awarded the Premi Internacional d'Assaig Josep Palau i Fabre (Galaxia Gutenberg, 2013).

Perry, Dennis R., “Whitman's Influence on Stoker's Dracula”, Whitmanarchives.com.

Pi, Joan. *Un poble d'accio*. (Barcelona: Llibreria Nacional Catalana , 1911).

Prefaci (amics: de Sucre (bnc : R.541.936) page i (of ii) Joan Pi – was in Asia then « pera seguir les vibracions del cor de mon, fins a caure en els EUnits...” quotes Rusin aiut archit repren nation where it is page ii: end para: “LLeigor: Entre'ls papers de Joan Pi, papers que penso ferte coneixer de mica, hi he trobat les quartiles que seguexen...Seran incoerentes, no t'ho nego, mes llegeix-les, amic: hi ha un cor qu'esclata”.

Popper, Karl. *La Lógica de la investigación científica*. (SegEdn, Tr : V. Sanchez de Zavala, 2008).

- Raleigh, Rich. "Wilde, Oscar [1854-1900]." *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia*. Edited by J.R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998). Accessed March 2, 2017. [http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry\\_72.html](http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry_72.html)
- Renehan, Edward J., Jr. *John Burroughs, An American Naturalist*. (Post Mills, Vt.: Chelsea Green, 1992).
- Reynolds, David S. *Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography*. (New York: Random House, 1996).
- Risques, Manel (dir.), Duarte, Àngel, Riquer, de, Borja and Rosich, Josep M. Roig Rosich. (Barcelona : Biblioteca Universitària, Pòrtic, 1999).
- Roca, Francesc, curator. *Cebrià Montoliu: (1873-1923)*. (Ajuntament de Barcelona: Regidoria d'Edicions i Publicacions, 1993).
- Walt Whitman, *Extrets de 'Cant de mi mateix'*. Translated by Lluís Roda. (La Pobla Llarga (Ribera Alta): Edicions 96, 2001).
- Rossetti, William Michael. *The Diary of W.M. Rossetti, 1870-1873*. Ed. Odette Bornand. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977).
- . *Letters . . . Concerning Whitman, Blake, and Shelley*. Ed. Clarence Gohdes and Paull Franklin Baum. (Durham, N.C.: Duke UP, 1934).
- . *Selected Letters of William Michael Rossetti*. Ed. Roger W. Peattie. (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1990).
- . comp. *Rossetti Papers, 1862 to 1870*. 1903. (New York: AMS, 1970).
- . ed. *American Poems*. (London: E. Moxon, 1872).
- . ed. *Humorous Poems*. (London: E. Moxon, 1872).
- Ruskin, John. *Natura*. Translated by Cebrià Montoliu. (Barcelona: Publicació-Joventut, 1903).
- Salvador-J. Rovira i Gomez. *Placid-Maria de Montoliu i de Sarriera : Primer marquès de Montoliu (1828-1899)*. 12th Premi d'Historia Gramunt i Subiela Premis Literaris Cuitat de (Tarragona:Arols Editors, 2005).
- Santayana, George. *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*. (1900). (Montana: KessingerPublishing, LLC, 2005). UPenn.edu. Accessed May 2015. <http://www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88/whitman-per-santayana.html>.
- Sarracino, Carmine. "Burroughs, John [1837–1921] and Ursula [1836–1917]." *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia*. Edited by J.R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings. (New York:

Garland Publishing, 1998). Accessed March 2, 2017.  
[http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry\\_15.html](http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry_15.html).

Sawyer, Roland D. *Walt Whitman, the prophet-poet*. (Boston: Four Seas, 1918). To note: Dedicated to the Scopes Monkey Trial lawyer, Clarence Darrow – who was also a Fairhope visitor.

Seidl Canby, Henry. *Walt Whitman: An American*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1943).

Shakespeare, William. *MacBeth*. Translated by Cebrià Montoliu. (Barcelona: L'Avenç, 1908).

Sotis, Grazia, "A Study of the Two Complete Translations of Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass" Into Italian" (1981). *Doctoral Dissertations*. AAI8203058.  
<http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/dissertations/AAI8203058>

Sucre, de, Josep M. *Memorias, vol. I and II*. (Barcelona: Ed Barna, SA BCN, 1963).

Sucre, de, Josep M. *Joan Maragall*. (Barcelona: Llibreria Nacional Catalana, 1921).

Tocqueville, Alexis De. *Democracy in America and Two Essays on America*. Translated by Gerald E. Bevan. Edited by Isaac Kramnick. (London: Penguin Books, 2003).

Trimble Annie. *Walt Whitman and mental science: An Interview* (Melbourne: Melbourne Specialty, 1900). <https://archive.org/details/waltwhitmanmenta00trimuoft>.

Traubel, Horace L., Richard Maurice Bucke, and Thomas B. Harned, eds. In *Re Walt Whitman*. (Philadelphia: McKay, 1893).

Tyler, Royall. *Spain - A Study of Her Life and Arts*. (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1909).

Vasseur, Alvaro Armando. *Cantos del nuevo mundo*. (Montevideo: O.M. Bertani. 1911).

\_\_\_\_\_. Vasseur, Alvaro Armando. Prólogo para la sexta edición de Poemas. (La Coruña, Galicia: Alfar 89, 1951).

\_\_\_\_\_. Vasseur, Álvaro Armando, Matt Cohen, and Rachel Price. "Preface to the Sixth Edition of "Walt Whitman: Poemas". *PMLA*. 123 (2008): 438-451.

\_\_\_\_\_. Whitman, Walt. *Poemas*. Translated by Álvaro Armando Vasseur. (Valencia: F. Sempere, 1912).

\_\_\_\_\_. « Prólogo para la sexta edición de Poemas ». (La Coruña, Galicia: Alfar 89, 1951).

\_\_\_\_\_. *Poemas*. (Montevideo: C. García. 1939).

Walling, William English. *Whitman and Traubel*. 1916. (New York: Haskell House, 1969).

Whitman, Walt. *Specimen Days*. Vol. 1 of Prose Works 1982. Ed. Floyd Stall. (New York: New York UP, 1963).

———. *The Correspondence*. Ed. Edwin Haviland Miller. 6 vols. (New York: New York UP, 1961-1977).

———. *Poems*. Ed. William Michael Rossetti. (London: John Camden Hotten, 1868).

———. *Prose Works 1892*. Ed. Floyd Stovall. 2 vols. (New York: New York UP, 1963-1964).

———. *Poesía Completa*, Tomo I. Translated by Pablo Mañé Garzón. (San Cugat del Vallés, Edicions 29 1980).

———. *Fulles d'Herba*. Translated by Cebrià Montoliu. (Barcelona: Biblioteca Popular de L'Avenç, 1909).

———. *Leaves of Grass*. 1855, and 1872, 1891-2 versions from The Walt Whitman Archive. Whitman, Walt. *Fulles d'Herba*. Translated by Jaume C. Pons Alorda. (Barcelona, Edicions 1984) 2014).

Whitman, Walt . "Have We a National Literature?" *The North American Review*, March 1891, 332-338. Accessed December 2016. <http://www.unz.org/Pub/NorthAmericanRev-1891mar-00332>

Wiksell, Percival. "Horace Traubel." *The FRA* 7, 1911.

Wyman, Mary A. "Burroughs and Whitman—Naturalist and Mystic." *The Lure for Feeling in the Creative Process*". By Wyman. (New York: Philosophical Library, 1960).

### Websites

<http://www.bnc.cat/>

<http://www.bne.es/es/Inicio/index.html>

[http://www.bnf.fr/fr/acc/x\\_accueil.html](http://www.bnf.fr/fr/acc/x_accueil.html)

[http://www.catedramariustorres.udl.cat/materials/biblioteca/\\_autors/index.php?acr\\_autor=bart00](http://www.catedramariustorres.udl.cat/materials/biblioteca/_autors/index.php?acr_autor=bart00)

<http://www.catalandictionary.org/en/search/>

[http://cvc.cervantes.es/literatura/aih/pdf/08/aih\\_08\\_2\\_068.pdf](http://cvc.cervantes.es/literatura/aih/pdf/08/aih_08_2_068.pdf)

<http://www.cervantesvirtual.com>

<http://www.ci.camden.nj.us/attractions/waltwhitman.html>

<http://www.culturacolima.gob.mx/imagenes/foroscolima/4/19.pdf/>

<http://www.cyclopaedia.es/wiki/Balbino-Davalos->

[http://www.encyclopedia.cat/EC-GEC-0008030.xml?s\\_q=agust%C3%AD%20bartra#.Um-NwyQm3co](http://www.encyclopedia.cat/EC-GEC-0008030.xml?s_q=agust%C3%AD%20bartra#.Um-NwyQm3co)

<http://fundcastro.org/tienda/unamuno/unamuno-miguel-de-tomo-v-cancionero-poesias-sueltas-traduccioness/>

<http://www.idref.fr/092072372>



<http://www.lletrescatalanes.cat>  
<http://lletra.uoc.edu>  
<http://projectetraces.uab.cat/tracesbd/cerquesguiades/Bartra/>  
<http://www.raco.cat/index.php/CuadernosArquitecturaUrbanismo/article/viewFile/111033/16992>  
<http://www.saltana.org>  
<http://searchworks.stanford.edu>  
<http://www.traduccionliteraria.org>  
<http://worldcat.org>  
<http://www.escriptors.cat>  
<http://www.bartramuria.cat>  
<http://www.visat.cat/espai-traductors/cat/traductor/215/agusti-bartra.html>  
[http://www.academia.edu/Documents/in/Translation\\_Studies](http://www.academia.edu/Documents/in/Translation_Studies)  
<http://edu.learnsoc.org/Chapters/6%20society/6%20literature%20and%20society.htm>  
<http://www.ensayistas.org/identidad/indices/autores/dario.htm>  
<http://www.iatis.org/>

The Atlantic Monthly

Online Books Page: University of Pennsylvania

<https://pfaffs.web.lehigh.edu/node/55859>

The Walt Whitman Quarterly: <http://ir.uiowa.edu/wwqr/>

The Walt Whitman Archive: <http://www.whitmanarchive.org/>

Westminster Review

## Appendix 1

Walt Whitman [1819 -1892]

PREFACE, 1855.

*to first issue of "LEAVES OF GRASS."*

*Brooklyn, N. Y.*

AMERICA does not repel the past, or what the past has produced under its forms, or amid other politics, or the idea of castes, or the old religions—accepts the lesson with calmness—is not impatient because the slough still sticks to opinions and manners and literature, while the life which served its requirements has passed into the new life of the new forms—perceives that the corpse is slowly borne from the eating and sleeping rooms of the house—perceives that it waits a little while in the door—that it was fittest for its days—that its action has descended to the stalwart and well-shaped heir who approaches—and that he shall be fittest for his days.

The Americans of all nations at any time upon the earth, have probably the fullest poetical nature. The United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem. In the history of the earth hitherto, the largest and most stirring appear tame and orderly to their ampler largeness and stir. Here at last is something in the doings of man that corresponds with the broadcast doings of the day and night. Here is action untied from strings, necessarily blind to particulars and details, magnificently moving in masses. Here is the hospitality which forever indicates heroes. Here the performance, disdainful of the trivial, unapproach'd in the tremendous audacity of its crowds and groupings, and the push of its perspective, spreads with crampless and flowing breadth, and showers its prolific and splendid extravagance. One sees it must indeed own the riches of the summer and winter, and need never be bankrupt while corn grows from the ground, or the orchards drop apples, or the bays contain fish, or men beget children upon women.

Other states indicate themselves in their deputies—but the genius of the United States is not best or most in its executives or legislatures, nor in its ambassadors or authors, or colleges or churches or parlors, nor even in its newspapers or inventors—but always most in the common people, south, north, west, east, in all its States, through all its mighty amplitude. The largeness of the nation, however, were monstrous without a corresponding largeness and generosity of the spirit of the citizen. Not swarming states, nor streets and steamships, nor prosperous business, nor farms, nor capital, nor learning, may suffice for the ideal of man—nor suffice the poet. No reminiscences may suffice either. A live nation can always cut a deep mark, and can have the best authority the cheapest—namely, from its own soul. This is the sum of the profitable uses of individuals or states, and of present action and grandeur, and of the subjects of poets. (As if it were necessary to trot back generation after generation to the eastern records! As if the beauty and sacredness of the demonstrable must fall behind that of the mythical! As if men do not make their mark out of any times! As if the opening of the western continent by discovery, and what has transpired in North and South America, were less than the small theatre of the antique, or the aimless sleep-walking of the middle ages!) The pride of the United States leaves the wealth and finesse of the cities, and all returns of commerce and agriculture, and all the magnitude of geography or shows of exterior victory, to enjoy the sight and realization of full-sized men, or one full-sized man unconquerable and simple.

The American poets are to enclose old and new, for America is the race of races. The expression of the American poet is to be transcendent and new. It is to be indirect, and not direct or descriptive or epic. Its quality goes through these to much more. Let the age and wars of other nations be chanted, and their eras and characters be illustrated, and that finish the verse. Not so the great psalm of the republic. Here the theme is creative, and has vista. Whatever stagnates in the flat of custom or obedience or legislation, the great poet never stagnates. Obedience does not master him, he masters it. High up out of reach he stands, turning a concentrated light—he turns the pivot with his finger—he baffles the swiftest runners as he stands, and easily overtakes and envelopes them. The time straying toward infidelity and confections and persiflage he withholds by steady faith. Faith is the antiseptic of the soul—it pervades the common people and preserves them they never give up believing and expecting and trusting. There is that indescribable freshness and unconsciousness about an illiterate person, that humbles and mocks the power of the noblest expressive genius. The poet sees for a certainty how one not a great artist may be just as sacred and perfect as the greatest artist.

The power to destroy or remould is freely used by the greatest poet, but seldom the power of attack. What is past is past. If he does not expose superior models, and prove himself by every step he takes, he is not what is wanted. The presence of the great poet conquers—not parleying, or struggling, or any prepared attempts. Now he has passed that way, see after him! There is not left any vestige of despair, or misanthropy, or cunning, or exclusiveness, or the ignominy of a nativity or color, or delusion of hell or the necessity of hell—and no man thenceforward shall be degraded for ignorance or weakness or sin. The greatest poet hardly knows pettiness or triviality. If he breathes into anything that was before thought small, it dilates with the grandeur and life of the universe. He is a seer—he is individual—he is complete in himself—the others are as good as he, only he sees it, and they do not. He is not one of the chorus—he does not stop for any regulation—he is the president of regulation. What the eyesight does to the rest, he does to the rest. Who knows the curious mystery of the eyesight? The other senses corroborate themselves, but this is removed from any proof but its own, and foreruns the identities of the spiritual world. A single glance of it mocks all the investigations of man, and all the instruments and books of the earth, and all reasoning. What is marvellous? what is unlikely? what is impossible or baseless or vague—after you have once just open'd the space of a peach-pit, and given audience to far and near, and to the sunset, and had all things enter with electric swiftness, softly and duly, without confusion or jostling or jam?

The land and sea, the animals, fishes and birds, the sky of heaven and the orbs, the forests, mountains and rivers, are not small themes—but folks expect of the poet to indicate more than the beauty and dignity which always attach to dumb real objects—they expect him to indicate the path between reality and their souls. Men and women perceive the beauty well enough—probably as well as he. The passionate tenacity of hunters, wood-men, early risers, cultivators of gardens and orchards and fields, the love of healthy women for the manly form, seafaring persons, drivers of horses, the passion for light and the, open air, all is an old varied sign of the unflinching perception of beauty, and of a residence of the poetic in out-door people. They can never be assisted by poets to perceive—some may, but they never can. The poetic quality is not marshal'd in rhyme or uniformity, or abstract addresses to things, nor in melancholy complaints, or good precepts, but is the life of these and much else, and is in the soul. The profit of rhyme is that it drops seeds of a sweeter and more luxuriant rhyme, and of uniformity that it conveys itself into its own roots in the ground out of sight. The rhyme and uniformity of perfect poems show the free growth of metrical laws, and bud from them as unerringly and loosely as lilacs and roses

on a bush, and take shapes as compact as the shapes of chestnuts and oranges, and melons and pears, and shed the perfume impalpable to form. The fluency and ornaments of the finest poems or music or orations or recitations, are not independent but dependent. All beauty comes from beautiful blood and a beautiful brain. If the greatneses are in conjunction in a man or woman, it is enough—the fact will prevail through the universe; but the gaggery and gilt of a million years will not prevail. Who troubles himself about his ornaments or fluency is lost. This is what you shall do: Love the earth and sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to every one that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence toward the people, take off your hat to nothing known or unknown, or to any man or number of men—go freely with powerful uneducated persons, and with the young, and with the mothers of families—re examine all you have been told in school or church or in any book, and dismiss whatever insults your own soul; and your very flesh shall be a great poem, and have the richest fluency, not only in its words, but in the silent lines of its lips and face, and between the lashes of your eyes, and in every motion and joint of your body. The poet shall not spend his time in unneeded work. He shall know that the ground is already plough'd and manured; others may not know it, but he shall. He shall go directly to the creation. His trust shall master the trust of everything he touches—and shall master all attachment.

The known universe has one complete lover, and that is the greatest poet. He consumes an eternal passion, and is indifferent which chance happens, and which possible contingency of fortune or misfortune, and persuades daily and hourly his delicious pay. What baulks or breaks others is fuel for his burning progress to contact and amorous joy. Other proportions of the reception of pleasure dwindle to nothing to his proportions. All expected from heaven or from the highest, he is rapport with in the sight of the daybreak, or the scenes of the winter woods, or the presence of children playing, or with his arm round the neck of a man or woman. His love above all love has leisure and expanse—he leaves room ahead of himself. He is no irresolute or suspicious lover—he is sure—he scorns intervals. His experience and the showers and thrills are not for nothing. Nothing can jar him—suffering and darkness cannot—death and fear cannot. To him complaint and jealousy and envy are corpses buried and rotten in the earth—he saw them buried. The sea is not surer of the shore, or the shore of the sea, than he is the fruition of his love, and of all perfection and beauty.

The fruition of beauty is no chance of miss or hit—it is as inevitable as life—it is exact and plumb as gravitation. From the eyesight proceeds another eyesight, and from the hearing proceeds another hearing, and from the voice proceeds another voice, eternally curious of the harmony of things with man. These understand the law of perfection in masses and floods—that it is profuse and impartial—that there is not a minute of the light or dark, nor an acre of the earth and sea, without it—nor any direction of the sky, nor any trade or employment, nor any turn of events. This is the reason that about the proper expression of beauty there is precision and balance. One part does not need to be thrust above another. The best singer is not the one who has the most lithe and powerful organ. The pleasure of poems is not in them that take the handsomest measure and sound.

Without effort, and without exposing in the least how it is done, the greatest poet brings the spirit of any or all events and passions and scenes and persons, some more and some less, to bear on your individual character as you hear or read. To do this well is to compete with the laws that pursue and follow Time. What is the purpose must surely be there, and the clue of it must be there—and the faintest indication is the indication of the best, and then becomes the clearest

indication. Past and present and future are not disjoin'd but join'd. The greatest poet forms the consistence of what is to be, from what has been and is. He drags the dead out of their coffins and stands them again on their feet. He says to the past, Rise and walk before me that I may realize you. He learns the lesson—he places himself where the future becomes present. The greatest poet does not only dazzle his rays over character and scenes and passions—he finally ascends, and finishes all—he exhibits the pinnacles that no man can tell what they are for, or what is beyond—he glows a moment on the extremest verge. He is most wonderful in his last half-hidden smile or frown; by that flash of the moment of parting the one that sees it shall be encouraged or terrified afterward for many years. The greatest poet does not moralize or make applications of morals—he knows the soul. The soul has that measureless pride which consists in never acknowledging any lessons or deductions but its own. But it has sympathy as measureless as its pride, and the one balances the other, and neither can stretch too far while it stretches in company with the other. The inmost secrets of art sleep with the twain. The greatest poet has lain close betwixt both, and they are vital in his style and thoughts.

The art of art, the glory of expression and the sunshine of the light of letters, is simplicity. Nothing is better than simplicity—nothing can make up for excess, or for the lack of definiteness. To carry on the heave of impulse and pierce intellectual depths and give all subjects their articulations, are powers neither common nor very uncommon. But to speak in literature with the perfect rectitude and insouciance of the movements of animals, and the unimpeachableness of the sentiment of trees in the woods and grass by the roadside, is the flawless triumph of art. If you have look'd on him who has achiev'd it you have look'd on one of the masters of the artists of all nations and times. You shall not contemplate the flight of the gray gull over the bay, or the mettlesome action of the blood horse, or the tall leaning of sun-flowers on their stalk, or the appearance of the sun journeying through heaven, or the appearance of the moon afterward, with any more satisfaction than you shall contemplate him. The great poet has less a mark'd style, and is more the channel of thoughts and things without increase or diminution, and is the free channel of himself. He swears to his art, I will not be meddlesome, I will not have in my writing any elegance, or effect, or originality, to hang in the way between me and the rest like curtains. I will have nothing hang in the way, not the richest curtains. What I tell I tell for precisely what it is. Let who may exalt or startle or fascinate or soothe, I will have purposes as health or heat or snow has, and be as regardless of observation. What I experience or portray shall go from my composition without a shred of my composition. You shall stand by my side and look in the mirror with me.

The old red blood and stainless gentility of great poets will be proved by their unconstraint. A heroic person walks at his ease through and out of that custom or precedent or authority that suits him not. Of the traits of the brotherhood of first-class writers, savans, musicians, inventors and artists, nothing is finer than silent defiance advancing from new free forms. In the need of poems, philosophy, politics, mechanism, science, behavior, the craft of art, an appropriate native grand opera, ship-craft, or any craft, he is greatest for ever and ever who contributes the greatest original practical example. The cleanest expression is that which finds no sphere worthy of itself, and makes one.

The messages of great poems to each man and woman are, Come to us on equal terms, only then can you understand us. We are no better than you, what we inclose you inclose, what we enjoy you may enjoy. Did you suppose there could be only one Supreme? We affirm there can be unnumber'd Supremes, and that one does not countervail another any more than one eyesight countervails another—and that men can be good or grand only of the consciousness of their

supremacy within them. What do you think is the grandeur of storms and dismemberments, and the deadliest battles and wrecks, and the wildest fury of the elements, and the power of the sea, and the motion of nature, and the throes of human desires, and dignity and hate and love? It is that something in the soul which says, Rage on, whirl on, I tread master here and everywhere—Master of the spasms of the sky and of the shatter of the sea, Master of nature and passion and death, and of all terror and all pain.

The American bards shall be mark'd for generosity and affection, and for encouraging competitors. They shall be Kosmos, without monopoly or secrecy, glad to pass anything to any one—hungry for equals night and day. They shall not be careful of riches and privilege—they shall be riches and privilege—they shall perceive who the most affluent man is. The most affluent man is he that confronts all the shows he sees by equivalents out of the stronger wealth of himself. The American bard shall delineate no class of persons, nor one or two out of the strata of interests, nor love most nor truth most, nor the soul most, nor the body most—and not be for the Eastern states more than the Western, or the Northern states more than the Southern.

Exact science and its practical movements are no checks on the greatest poet, but always his encouragement and support. The outset and remembrance are there—there the arms that lifted him first, and braced him best—there he returns after all his goings and comings. The sailor and traveler—the anatomist, chemist, astronomer, geologist, phrenologist, spiritualist, mathematician, historian, and lexicographer, are not poets, but they are the lawgivers of poets, and their construction underlies the structure of every perfect poem. No matter what rises or is utter'd, they sent the seed of the conception of it—of them and by them stand the visible proofs of souls. If there shall be love and content between the father and the son, and if the greatness of the son is the exuding of the greatness of the father, there shall be love between the poet and the man of demonstrable science. In the beauty of poems are henceforth the tuft and final applause of science.

Great is the faith of the flush of knowledge, and of the investigation of the depths of qualities and things. Cleaving and circling here swells the soul of the poet, yet is president of itself always. The depths are fathomless, and therefore calm. The innocence and nakedness are resumed—they are neither modest nor immodest. The whole theory of the supernatural, and all that was twined with it or educed out of it, departs as a dream. What has ever happen'd—what happens, and whatever may or shall happen, the vital laws inclose all. They are sufficient for any case and for all cases—none to be hurried or retarded—any special miracle of affairs or persons inadmissible in the vast clear scheme where every motion and every spear of grass, and the frames and spirits of men and women and all that concerns them, are unspeakably perfect miracles, all referring to all, and each distinct and in its place. It is also not consistent with the reality of the soul to admit that there is anything in the known universe more divine than men and women.

Men and women, and the earth and all upon it, are to be taken as they are, and the investigation of their past and present and future shall be unintermitted, and shall be done with perfect candor. Upon this basis philosophy speculates, ever looking towards the poet, ever regarding the eternal tendencies of all toward happiness, never inconsistent with what is clear to the senses and to the soul. For the eternal tendencies of all toward happiness make the only point of sane philosophy. Whatever comprehends less than that—whatever is less than the laws of light and of astronomical motion—or less than the laws that follow the thief, the liar, the glutton and the drunkard, through this life and doubtless afterward—or less than vast stretches of time, or the slow formation of density, or the patient upheaving of strata—is of no account. Whatever would put God in a poem or system of philosophy as contending against some being or influence, is

also of no account. Sanity and ensemble characterize the great master—spoilt in one principle, all is spoilt. The great master has nothing to do with miracles. He sees health for himself in being one of the mass—he sees the hiatus in singular eminence. To the perfect shape comes common ground. To be under the general law is great, for that is to correspond with it. The master knows that he is unspeakably great, and that all are unspeakably great—that nothing, for instance, is greater than to conceive children, and bring them up well—that to *be* is just as great as to perceive or tell.

In the make of the great masters the idea of political liberty is indispensable. Liberty takes the adherence of heroes wherever man and woman exist—but never takes any adherence or welcome from the rest more than from poets. They are the voice and exposition of liberty. They out of ages are worthy the grand idea—to them it is confined, and they must sustain it. Nothing has precedence of it, and nothing can warp or degrade it.

As the attributes of the poets of the kosmos concentrate in the real body, and in the pleasure of things, they possess the superiority of genuineness over all fiction and romance. As they emit themselves, facts are shower'd over with light—the daylight is lit with more volatile light—the deep between the setting and rising sun goes deeper many fold. Each precise object or condition or combination or process exhibits a beauty—the multiplication table its—old age its—the carpenter's trade its—the grand opera its—the huge-hull'd clean-shap'd New York clipper at sea under steam or full sail gleams with unmatched beauty—the American circles and large harmonies of government gleam with theirs—and the commonest definite intentions and actions with theirs. The poets of the kosmos advance through all interpositions and coverings and turmoils and stratagems to first principles. They are of use—they dissolve poverty from its need, and riches from its conceit. You large proprietor, they say, shall not realize or perceive more than any one else. The owner of the library is not he who holds a legal title to it, having bought and paid for it. Any one and every one is owner of the library, (indeed he or she alone is owner,) who can read the same through all the varieties of tongues and subjects and styles, and in whom they enter with ease, and make supple and powerful and rich and large.

These American States, strong and healthy and accomplish'd shall receive no pleasure from violations of natural models, and must not permit them. In paintings or mouldings or carvings in mineral or wood, or in the illustrations of books or newspapers, or in the patterns of woven stuffs, or anything to beautify rooms or furniture or costumes, or to put upon cornices or monuments, or on the prows or sterns of ships, or to put anywhere before the human eye indoors or out, that which distorts honest shapes, or which creates unearthly beings or places or contingencies, is a nuisance and revolt. Of the human form especially, it is so great it must never be made ridiculous. Of ornaments to a work nothing outre can be allow'd—but those ornaments can be allow'd that conform to the perfect facts of the open air, and that flow out of the nature of the work, and come irrepressibly from it, and are necessary to the completion of the work. Most works are most beautiful without ornament. Exaggerations will be revenged in human physiology. Clean and vigorous children are jetted and conceiv'd only in those communities where the models of natural forms are public every day. Great genius and the people of these States must never be demean'd to romances. As soon as histories are properly told, no more need of romances.

The great poets are to be known by the absence in them of tricks, and by the justification of perfect personal candor. All faults may be forgiven of him who has perfect candor. Henceforth let no man of us lie, for we have seen that openness wins the inner and outer world, and that there is no single exception, and that never since our earth gather'd itself in a mass have deceit or

subterfuge or prevarication attracted its smallest particle or the faintest tinge of a shade—and that through the enveloping wealth and rank of a state, or the whole republic of states, a sneak or sly person shall be discover'd and despised—and that the soul has never once been fool'd and never can be fool'd—and thrift without the loving nod of the soul is only of a fœtid puff—and there never grew up in any of the continents of the globe, nor upon any planet or satellite, nor in that condition which precedes the birth of babes, nor at any time during the changes of life, nor in any stretch of abeyance or action of vitality, nor in any process of formation or reformation anywhere, a being whose instinct hated the truth.

Extreme caution or prudence, the soundest organic health, large hope and comparison and fondness for women and children, large alimentiveness and destructiveness and causality, with a perfect sense of the oneness of nature, and the propriety of the same spirit applied to human affairs, are called up of the float of the brain of the world to be parts of the greatest poet from his birth out of his mother's womb, and from her birth out of her mother's. Caution seldom goes far enough. It has been thought that the prudent citizen was the citizen who applied himself to solid gains, and did well for himself and for his family, and completed a lawful life without debt or crime. The greatest poet sees and admits these economies as he sees the economies of food and sleep, but has higher notions of prudence than to think he gives much when he gives a few slight attentions at the latch of the gate. The premises of the prudence of life are not the hospitality of it, or the ripeness and harvest of it. Beyond the independence of a little sum laid aside for burial-money, and of a few clap-boards around and shingles overhead on a lot of American soil own'd, and the easy dollars that supply the year's plain clothing and meals, and the melancholy prudence of the abandonment of such a great being as a man is, to the toss and pallor of years of money-making, with all their scorching days and icy nights, and all their stifling deceits and underhand dodgings, or infinitesimals of parlors, or shameless stuffing while others starve, and all the loss of the bloom and odor of the earth, and of the flowers and atmosphere, and of the sea, and of the true taste of the women and men you pass or have to do with in youth or middle age, and the issuing sickness and desperate revolt at the close of a life without elevation or naïveté, (even if you have achiev'd a secure 10,000 a year, or election to Congress or the Governorship,) and the ghastly chatter of a death without serenity or majesty, is the great fraud upon modern civilization and forethought, blotching the surface and system which civilization undeniably drafts, and moistening with tears the immense features it spreads and spreads with such velocity before the reach'd kisses of the soul.

Ever the right explanation remains to be made about prudence. The prudence of the mere wealth and respectability of the most esteem'd life appears too faint for the eye to observe at all, when little and large alike drop quietly aside at the thought of the prudence suitable for immortality. What is the wisdom that fills the thinness of a year, or seventy or eighty years—to the wisdom spaced out by ages, and coming back at a certain time with strong reinforcements and rich presents, and the clear faces of wedding-guests as far as you can look, in every direction, running gaily toward you? Only the soul is of itself—all else has reference to what ensues. All that a person does or thinks is of consequence. Nor can the push of charity or personal force ever be anything else than the profoundest reason, whether it brings argument to hand or no. No specification is necessary—to add or subtract or divide is in vain. Little or big, learn'd or unlearn'd, white or black, legal or illegal, sick or well, from the first inspiration down the windpipe to the last expiration out of it, all that a male or female does that is vigorous and benevolent and clean is so much sure profit to him or her in the unshakable order of the universe, and through the whole scope of it forever. The prudence of the greatest poet answers at last the



craving and glut of the soul, puts off nothing, permits no let-up for its own case or any case, has no particular sabbath or judgment day, divides not the living from the dead, or the righteous from the unrighteous, is satisfied with the present, matches every thought or act by its correlative, and knows no possible forgiveness or deputed atonement.

The direct trial of him who would be the greatest poet is to-day. If he does not flood himself with the immediate age as with vast oceanic tides—if he be not himself the age transfigur'd, and if to him is not open'd the eternity which gives similitude to all periods and locations and processes, and animate and inanimate forms, and which is the bond of time, and rises up from its inconceivable vagueness and infiniteness in the swimming shapes of to-day, and is held by the ductile anchors of life, and makes the present spot the passage from what was to what shall be, and commits itself to the representation of this wave of an hour, and this one of the sixty beautiful children of the wave—let him merge in the general run, and wait his development.

Still the final test of poem, or any character or work, remains. The prescient poet projects himself centuries ahead, and judges performer or performance after the changes of time. Does it live through them? Does it still hold on untired? Will the same style, and the direction of genius to similar points, be satisfactory now? Have the marches of tens and hundreds and thousands of years made willing detours to the right hand and the left hand for his sake? Is he beloved long and long after he is buried? Does the young man think often of him? and the young woman think often of him? and do the middle-aged and the old think of him?

A great poem is for ages and ages in common, and for all degrees and complexions, and all departments and sects, and for a woman as much as a man, and a man as much as a woman. A great poem is no finish to a man or woman, but rather a beginning. Has any one fancied he could sit at last under some due authority, and rest satisfied with explanations, and realize, and be content: and full? To no such terminus does the greatest poet bring—he brings neither cessation nor shelter'd fatness and ease. The touch of him, like Nature, tells in action. Whom he takes he takes with firm sure grasp into live regions previously unattain'd—thenceforward is no rest—they see the space and ineffable sheen that turn the old spots and lights into dead vacuums. Now there shall be a man cohered out of tumult and chaos—the elder encourages the younger and shows him how—they two shall launch off fearlessly together till the new world fits an orbits for itself, and looks unabash'd on the lesser orbit of the stars, and sweeps through the ceaseless rings, and shall never be quiet again.

There will soon be no more priests. Their work is done. A new order shall arise, and they shall be the priests of man, and every man shall be his own priest. They shall find their inspiration in real object to-day, symptoms of the past and future. They shall not deign to defend immortality or God, or the perfection of things, or liberty, or the exquisite beauty and reality of the soul. They shall arise in America, and be responded to from the remainder of the earth.

The English language befriends the grand American expression—it is brawny enough, and limber and full enough. On the tough stock of a race who through all change of circumstance was never without the idea of political liberty, which is the animus of all liberty, it has attracted the terms of daintier and gayer and subtler and more elegant tongues. It is the powerful language of resistance—it is the dialect of common sense. It is the speech of the proud and melancholy races, and of all who aspire. It is the chosen tongue to express growth, faith, self-esteem, freedom, justice, equality, friendliness, amplitude, prudence, decision, and courage. It is the medium that shall well-nigh express the inexpressible.

No great literature, nor any like style of behavior or oratory, or social intercourse or household arrangements, or public institutions, or the treatment by bosses of employ'd people, nor executive

detail, or detail of the army and navy, nor spirit of legislation or courts, or police or tuition or architecture, or songs or amusements, can long elude the jealous and passionate instinct of American standards. Whether or no the sign appears from the mouths of the people; it throbs a live interrogation in every freeman's and freewoman's heart, after that which passes by, or this built to remain. Is it uniform with my country? Are its disposals without ignominious distinctions? Is it for the ever-growing communes of brothers and lovers, large, well united, proud, beyond the old models, generous beyond all models? Is it something grown fresh out of the fields, or drawn from the sea for use to me to-day here? I know that what answers for me, an American, in Texas, Ohio, Canada, must answer for any individual or nation that serves for a part of my materials. Does this answer? Is it for the nursing of the young of the republic? Does it solve readily with the sweet milk of the nipples of the breasts of the Mother of Many Children? America prepares with composure and good-will for the visitors that have sent word. It is not intellect that is to be their warrant and welcome. The talented, the artist, the ingenious, the editor, the statesman, the erudite, are not unappreciated—they fall in their place and do their work. The soul of the nation also does its work. It rejects none, it permits all. Only toward the like of itself will it advance half way. An individual is as superb as a nation when he has the qualities which make a superb nation. The soul of the largest and wealthiest and proudest nation may well go half-way to meet that of its poets.

## Appendix 2

Emerson, Ralph Waldo [1803 – 1882]

“The Poet” / Atlantic Monthly / 1844

A moody child and wildly wise  
Pursued the game with joyful eyes,  
Which chose, like meteors, their way,  
And rived the dark with private ray:  
They overleapt the horizon's edge,  
Searched with Apollo's privilege;  
Through man, and woman, and sea, and star,  
Saw the dance of nature forward far;  
Through worlds, and races, and terms, and times,  
Saw musical order, and pairing rhymes.

Olympian bards who sung  
Divine ideas below,  
Which always find us young,  
And always keep us so.

Those who are esteemed umpires of taste, are often persons knowledge of admired pictures or sculptures, and have an inclination for whatever is elegant; but if you inquire whether they are beautiful souls, and whether their own acts are like fair pictures, you learn that they are selfish and sensual. Their cultivation is local, as if you should rub a log of dry wood in one spot to produce fire, all the rest remaining cold. Their knowledge of the fine arts is some study of rules and particulars, or some limited judgment of color or form, which is exercised for amusement or for show. It is a proof of the shallowness of the doctrine of beauty, as it lies in the minds of our amateurs, that men seem to have lost the perception of the instant dependence of form upon soul. There is no doctrine of forms in our philosophy. We were put into our bodies, as fire is put into a pan, to be carried about; but there is no accurate adjustment between the spirit and the organ, much less is the latter the germination of the former. So in regard to other forms, the intellectual men do not believe in any essential dependence of the material world on thought and volition. Theologians think it a pretty air-castle to talk of the spiritual meaning of a ship or a cloud, of a city or a contract, but they prefer to come again to the solid ground of historical evidence; and even the poets are contented with a civil and conformed manner of living, and to write poems from the fancy, at a safe distance from their own experience. But the highest minds of the world have never ceased to explore the double meaning, or, shall I say, the quadruple, or the centuple, or much more manifold meaning, of every sensuous fact: Orpheus, Empedocles, Heraclitus, Plato, Plutarch, Dante, Swedenborg, and the masters of sculpture, picture, and poetry. For we are not pans and barrows, nor even porters of the fire and torch-bearers, but children of the fire, made of it, and only the same divinity transmuted, and at two or three removes, when we know least about it. And this hidden truth, that the fountains whence all this river of Time, and its

creatures, floweth, are intrinsically ideal and beautiful, draws us to the consideration of the nature and functions of the Poet, or the man of Beauty, to the means and materials he uses, and to the general aspect of the art in the present time.

The breadth of the problem is great, for the poet is representative. He stands among partial men for the complete man, and apprises us not of his wealth, but of the common-wealth. The young man reveres men of genius, because, to speak truly, they are more himself than he is. They receive of the soul as he also receives, but they more. Nature enhances her beauty, to the eye of loving men, from their belief that the poet is beholding her shows at the same time. He is isolated among his contemporaries, by truth and by his art, but with this consolation in his pursuits, that they will draw all men sooner or later. For all men live by truth, and stand in need of expression. In love, in art, in avarice, in politics, in labor, in games, we study to utter our painful secret. The man is only half himself, the other half is his expression.

Notwithstanding this necessity to be published, adequate expression is rare. I know not how it is that we need an interpreter; but the great majority of men seem to be minors, who have not yet come into possession of their own, or mutes, who cannot report the conversation they have had with nature. There is no man who does not anticipate a supersensual utility in the sun, and stars, earth, and water. These stand and wait to render him a peculiar service. But there is some obstruction, or some excess of phlegm in our constitution, which does not suffer them to yield the due effect. Too feeble fall the impressions of nature on us to make us artists. Every touch should thrill. Every man should be so much an artist, that he could report in conversation what had befallen him. Yet, in our experience, the rays or appulses have sufficient force to arrive at the senses, but not enough to reach the quick, and compel the reproduction of themselves in speech. The poet is the person in whom these powers are in balance, the man without impediment, who sees and handles that which others dream of, traverses the whole scale of experience, and is representative of man, in virtue of being the largest power to receive and to impart.

For the Universe has three children, born at one time, which reappear, under different names, in every system of thought, whether they be called cause, operation, and effect; or, more poetically, Jove, Pluto, Neptune; or, theologically, the Father, the Spirit, and the Son but which we will call here, the Knower, the Doer, and the Sayer. These stand respectively for the love of truth, for the love of good, and for the love of beauty. These three are equal. Each is that which he is essentially, so that he cannot be surmounted or analyzed, and each of these three has the power of the others latent in him, and his own patent.

The poet is the sayer, the namer, and represents beauty. He is a sovereign, and stands on the centre. For the world is not painted, or adorned, but is from the beginning beautiful; and God has not made some beautiful things, but Beauty is the creator of the universe. Therefore the poet is

not any permissive potentate, but is emperor in his own right. Criticism is infested with a cant of materialism, which assumes that manual skill and activity is the first merit of all men, and disparages such as say and do not, overlooking the fact, that some men, namely, poets, are natural sayers, sent into the world to the end of expression, and confounds them with those whose province is action, but who quit it to imitate the sayers. But Homer's words are as costly and admirable to Homer, as Agamemnon's victories are to Agamemnon. The poet does not wait for the hero or the sage, but, as they act and think primarily, so he writes primarily what will and must be spoken, reckoning the others, though primaries also, yet, in respect to him, secondaries and servants; as sitters or models in the studio of a painter, or as assistants who bring building materials to an architect.

For poetry was all written before time was, and whenever we are so finely organized that we can penetrate into that region where the air is music, we hear those primal warblings, and attempt to write them down, but we lose ever and anon a word, or a verse, and substitute something of our own, and thus miswrite the poem. The men of more delicate ear write down these cadences more faithfully, and these transcripts, though imperfect, become the songs of the nations. For nature is as truly beautiful as it is good, or as it is reasonable, and must as much appear, as it must be done, or be known. Words and deeds are quite indifferent modes of the divine energy. Words are also actions, and actions are a kind of words.

The sign and credentials of the poet are, that he announces that which no man foretold. He is the true and only doctor; he knows and tells; he is the only teller of news, for he was present and privy to the appearance which he describes. He is a beholder of ideas, and an utterer of the necessary and causal. For we do not speak now of men of poetical talents, or of industry and skill in metre, but of the true poet. I took part in a conversation the other day, concerning a recent writer of lyrics, a man of subtle mind, whose head appeared to be a music-box of delicate tunes and rhythms, and whose skill, and command of language, we could not sufficiently praise. But when the question arose, whether he was not only a lyrist, but a poet, we were obliged to confess that he is plainly a contemporary, not an eternal man. He does not stand out of our low limitations, like a Chimborazo under the line, running up from the torrid base through all the climates of the globe, with belts of the herbage of every latitude on its high and mottled sides; but this genius is the landscape-garden of a modern house, adorned with fountains and statues, with well-bred men and women standing and sitting in the walks and terraces. We hear, through all the varied music, the ground-tone of conventional life. Our poets are men of talents who sing, and not the children of music. The argument is secondary, the finish of the verses is primary.

For it is not metres, but a metre-making argument, that makes a poem, — a thought so passionate and alive, that, like the spirit of a plant or an animal, it has an architecture of its own, and adorns nature with a new thing. The thought and the form are equal in the order of time, but in the order of genesis the thought is prior to the form. The poet has a new thought: he has a whole new experience to unfold; he will tell us how it was with him, and all men will be the richer in his

fortune. For, the experience of each new age requires a new confession, and the world seems always waiting for its poet. I remember, when I was young, how much I was moved one morning by tidings that genius had appeared in a youth who sat near me at table. He had left his work, and gone rambling none knew whither, and had written hundreds of lines, but could not tell whether that which was in him was therein told: he could tell nothing but that all was changed, — man, beast, heaven, earth, and sea. How gladly we listened! how credulous! Society seemed to be compromised. We sat in the aurora of a sunrise which was to put out all the stars. Boston seemed to be at twice the distance it had the night before, or was much farther than that. Rome, — what was Rome? Plutarch and Shakespeare were in the yellow leaf, and Homer no more should be heard of. It is much to know that poetry has been written this very day, under this very roof, by your side. What! that wonderful spirit has not expired! these stony moments are still sparkling and animated! I had fancied that the oracles were all silent, and nature had spent her fires, and behold! all night, from every pore, these fine auroras have been streaming. Everyone has some interest in the advent of the poet, and no one knows how much it may concern him. We know that the secret of the world is profound, but who or what shall be our interpreter, we know not. A mountain ramble, a new style of face, a new person, may put the key into our hands. Of course, the value of genius to us is in the veracity of its report. Talent may frolic and juggle; genius realizes and adds. Mankind, in good earnest, have availed so far in understanding themselves and their work, that the foremost watchman on the peak announces his news. It is the truest word ever spoken, and the phrase will be the fittest, most musical, and the unerring voice of the world for that time.

All that we call sacred history attests that the birth of a poet is the principal event in chronology. Man, never so often deceived, still watches for the arrival of a brother who can hold him steady to a truth, until he has made it his own. With what joy I begin to read a poem, which I confide in as an inspiration! And now my chains are to be broken; I shall mount above these clouds and opaque airs in which I live, — opaque, though they seem transparent, — and from the heaven of truth I shall see and comprehend my relations. That will reconcile me to life, and renovate nature, to see trifles animated by a tendency, and to know what I am doing. Life will no more be a noise; now I shall see men and women, and know the signs by which they may be discerned from fools and satans. This day shall be better than my birth-day: then I became an animal: now I am invited into the science of the real. Such is the hope, but the fruition is postponed. Oftener it falls, that this winged man, who will carry me into the heaven, whirls me into the clouds, then leaps and frisks about with me from cloud to cloud, still affirming that he is bound heavenward; and I, being myself a novice, am slow in perceiving that he does not know the way into the heavens, and is merely bent that I should admire his skill to rise, like a fowl or a flying fish, a little way from the ground or the water; but the all-piercing, all-feeding, and ocular air of heaven, that man shall never inhabit. I tumble down again soon into my old nooks, and lead the life of exaggerations as before, and have lost my faith in the possibility of any guide who can lead me thither where I would be.

But leaving these victims of vanity, let us, with new hope, observe how nature, by worthier impulses, has ensured the poet's fidelity to his office of announcement and affirming, namely, by the beauty of things, which becomes a new, and higher beauty, when expressed. Nature offers all her creatures to him as a picture-language. Being used as a type, a second wonderful value appears in the object, far better than its old value, as the carpenter's stretched cord, if you hold your ear close enough, is musical in the breeze. "Things more excellent than every image," says Jamblichus, "are expressed through images." Things admit of being used as symbols, because nature is a symbol, in the whole, and in every part. Every line we can draw in the sand, has expression; and there is no body without its spirit or genius. All form is an effect of character; all condition, of the quality of the life; all harmony, of health; (and, for this reason, a perception of beauty should be sympathetic, or proper only to the good.) The beautiful rests on the foundations of the necessary. The soul makes the body, as the wise Spenser teaches: —

"So every spirit, as it is most pure,  
And hath in it the more of heavenly light,  
So it the fairer body doth procure  
To habit in, and it more fairly dight,  
With cheerful grace and amiable sight.  
For, of the soul, the body form doth take,  
For soul is form, and doth the body make."

Here we find ourselves, suddenly, not in a critical speculation, but in a holy place, and should go very warily and reverently. We stand before the secret of the world, there where Being passes into Appearance, and Unity into Variety.

The Universe is the externisation of the soul. Wherever the life is, that bursts into appearance around it. Our science is sensual, and therefore superficial. The earth, and the heavenly bodies, physics, and chemistry, we sensually treat, as if they were self-existent; but these are the retinue of that Being we have. "The mighty heaven," said Proclus, "exhibits, in its transfigurations, clear images of the splendor of intellectual perceptions; being moved in conjunction with the unapparent periods of intellectual natures." Therefore, science always goes abreast with the just elevation of the man, keeping step with religion and metaphysics; or, the state of science is an index of our self-knowledge. Since everything in nature answers to a moral power, if any phenomenon remains brute and dark, it is that the corresponding faculty in the observer is not yet active.

No wonder, then, if these waters be so deep, that we hover over them with a religious regard. The beauty of the fable proves the importance of the sense; to the poet, and to all others; or, if you please, every man is so far a poet as to be susceptible of these enchantments of nature: for all men have the thoughts whereof the universe is the celebration. I find that the fascination resides

in the symbol. Who loves nature? Who does not? Is it only poets, and men of leisure and cultivation, who live with her? No; but also hunters, farmers, grooms, and butchers, though they express their affection in their choice of life, and not in their choice of words. The writer wonders what the coachman or the hunter values in riding, in horses, and dogs. It is not superficial qualities. When you talk with him, he holds these at as slight a rate as you. His worship is sympathetic; he has no definitions, but he is commanded in nature, by the living power which he feels to be there present. No imitation, or playing of these things, would content him; he loves the earnest of the northwind, of rain, of stone, and wood, and iron. A beauty not explicable, is dearer than a beauty which we can see to the end of. It is nature the symbol, nature certifying the supernatural, body overflowed by life, which he worships, with coarse, but sincere rites.

The inwardness, and mystery, of this attachment, drives men of every class to the use of emblems. The schools of poets, and philosophers, are not more intoxicated with their symbols, than the populace with theirs. In our political parties, compute the power of badges and emblems. See the great ball which they roll from Baltimore to Bunker hill! In the political processions, Lowell goes in a loom, and Lynn in a shoe, and Salem in a ship. Witness the cider-barrel, the log-cabin, the hickory-stick, the palmetto, and all the cognizances of party. See the power of national emblems. Some stars, lilies, leopards, a crescent, a lion, an eagle, or other figure, which came into credit God knows how, on an old rag of bunting, blowing in the wind, on a fort, at the ends of the earth, shall make the blood tingle under the rudest, or the most conventional exterior. The people fancy they hate poetry, and they are all poets and mystics!

Beyond this universality of the symbolic language, we are apprised of the divineness of this superior use of things, whereby the world is a temple, whose walls are covered with emblems, pictures, and commandments of the Deity, in this, that there is no fact in nature which does not carry the whole sense of nature; and the distinctions which we make in events, and in affairs, of low and high, honest and base, disappear when nature is used as a symbol. Thought makes every thing fit for use. The vocabulary of an omniscient man would embrace words and images excluded from polite conversation. What would be base, or even obscene, to the obscene, becomes illustrious, spoken in a new connexion of thought. The piety of the Hebrew prophets purges their grossness. The circumcision is an example of the power of poetry to raise the low and offensive. Small and mean things serve as well as great symbols. The meaner the type by which a law is expressed, the more pungent it is, and the more lasting in the memories of men: just as we choose the smallest box, or case, in which any needful utensil can be carried. Bare lists of words are found suggestive, to an imaginative and excited mind; as it is related of Lord Chatham, that he was accustomed to read in Bailey's Dictionary, when he was preparing to speak in Parliament. The poorest experience is rich enough for all the purposes of expressing thought. Why covet a knowledge of new facts? Day and night, house and garden, a few books, a few actions, serve us as well as would all trades and all spectacles. We are far from having exhausted the significance of the few symbols we use. We can come to use them yet with a terrible



simplicity. It does not need that a poem should be long. Every word was once a poem. Every new relation is a new word. Also, we use defects and deformities to a sacred purpose, so expressing our sense that the evils of the world are such only to the evil eye. In the old mythology, mythologists observe, defects are ascribed to divine natures, as lameness to Vulcan, blindness to Cupid, and the like, to signify exuberances.

For, as it is dislocation and detachment from the life of God, that makes things ugly, the poet, who re-attaches things to nature and the Whole, — re-attaching even artificial things, and violations of nature, to nature, by a deeper insight, — disposes very easily of the most disagreeable facts. Readers of poetry see the factory-village, and the railway, and fancy that the poetry of the landscape is broken up by these; for these works of art are not yet consecrated in their reading; but the poet sees them fall within the great Order not less than the beehive, or the spider's geometrical web. Nature adopts them very fast into her vital circles, and the gliding train of cars she loves like her own. Besides, in a centred mind, it signifies nothing how many mechanical inventions you exhibit. Though you add millions, and never so surprising, the fact of mechanics has not gained a grain's weight. The spiritual fact remains unalterable, by many or by few particulars; as no mountain is of any appreciable height to break the curve of the sphere. A shrewd country-boy goes to the city for the first time, and the complacent citizen is not satisfied with his little wonder. It is not that he does not see all the fine houses, and know that he never saw such before, but he disposes of them as easily as the poet finds place for the railway. The chief value of the new fact, is to enhance the great and constant fact of Life, which can dwarf any and every circumstance, and to which the belt of wampum, and the commerce of America, are alike.

The world being thus put under the mind for verb and noun, the poet is he who can articulate it. For, though life is great, and fascinates, and absorbs, — and though all men are intelligent of the symbols through which it is named, — yet they cannot originally use them. We are symbols, and inhabit symbols; workman, work, and tools, words and things, birth and death, all are emblems; but we sympathize with the symbols, and, being infatuated with the economical uses of things, we do not know that they are thoughts. The poet, by an ulterior intellectual perception, gives them a power which makes their old use forgotten, and puts eyes, and a tongue, into every dumb and inanimate object. He perceives the independence of the thought on the symbol, the stability of the thought, the accidentality and fugacity of the symbol. As the eyes of Lyncaeus were said to see through the earth, so the poet turns the world to glass, and shows us all things in their right series and procession. For, through that better perception, he stands one step nearer to things, and sees the flowing or metamorphosis; perceives that thought is multiform; that within the form of every creature is a force impelling it to ascend into a higher form; and, following with his eyes the life, uses the forms which express that life, and so his speech flows with the flowing of nature. All the facts of the animal economy, sex, nutriment, gestation, birth, growth, are symbols of the passage of the world into the soul of man, to suffer there a change, and reappear a new and higher fact. He uses forms according to the life, and not according to the form. This is true

science. The poet alone knows astronomy, chemistry, vegetation, and animation, for he does not stop at these facts, but employs them as signs. He knows why the plain, or meadow of space, was strewn with these flowers we call suns, and moons, and stars; why the great deep is adorned with animals, with men, and gods; for, in every word he speaks he rides on them as the horses of thought.

By virtue of this science the poet is the Namer, or Language-maker, naming things sometimes after their appearance, sometimes after their essence, and giving to everyone its own name and not another's, thereby rejoicing the intellect, which delights in detachment or boundary. The poets made all the words, and therefore language is the archives of history, and, if we must say it, a sort of tomb of the muses. For, though the origin of most of our words is forgotten, each word was at first a stroke of genius, and obtained currency, because for the moment it symbolized the world to the first speaker and to the hearer. The etymologist finds the deadest word to have been once a brilliant picture. Language is fossil poetry. As the limestone of the continent consists of infinite masses of the shells of animalcules, so language is made up of images, or tropes, which now, in their secondary use, have long ceased to remind us of their poetic origin. But the poet names the thing because he sees it, or comes one step nearer to it than any other. This expression, or naming, is not art, but a second nature, grown out of the first, as a leaf out of a tree. What we call nature, is a certain self-regulated motion, or change; and nature does all things by her own hands, and does not leave another to baptise her, but baptises herself; and this through the metamorphosis again. I remember that a certain poet described it to me thus:

Genius is the activity which repairs the decays of things, whether wholly or partly of a material and finite kind. Nature, through all her kingdoms, insures herself. Nobody cares for planting the poor fungus: so she shakes down from the gills of one agaric countless spores, any one of which, being preserved, transmits new billions of spores to-morrow or next day. The new agaric of this hour has a chance which the old one had not. This atom of seed is thrown into a new place, not subject to the accidents which destroyed its parent two rods off. She makes a man; and having brought him to ripe age, she will no longer run the risk of losing this wonder at a blow, but she detaches from him a new self, that the kind may be safe from accidents to which the individual is exposed. So when the soul of the poet has come to ripeness of thought, she detaches and sends away from it its poems or songs, — a fearless, sleepless, deathless progeny, which is not exposed to the accidents of the weary kingdom of time: a fearless, vivacious offspring, clad with wings (such was the virtue of the soul out of which they came), which carry them fast and far, and infix them irrecoverably into the hearts of men. These wings are the beauty of the poet's soul. The songs, thus flying immortal from their mortal parent, are pursued by clamorous flights of censures, which swarm in far greater numbers, and threaten to devour them; but these last are not winged. At the end of a very short leap they fall plump down, and rot, having received from the souls out of which they came no beautiful wings. But the melodies of the poet ascend, and leap, and pierce into the deeps of infinite time.

So far the bard taught me, using his freer speech. But nature has a higher end, in the production of new individuals, than security, namely, *ascension*, or, the passage of the soul into higher forms. I knew, in my younger days, the sculptor who made the statue of the youth which stands in the public garden. He was, as I remember, unable to tell directly, what made him happy, or unhappy, but by wonderful indirections he could tell. He rose one day, according to his habit, before the dawn, and saw the morning break, grand as the eternity out of which it came, and, for many days after, he strove to express this tranquillity, and, lo! his chisel had fashioned out of marble the form of a beautiful youth, Phosphorus, whose aspect is such, that, it is said, all persons who look on it become silent. The poet also resigns himself to his mood, and that thought which agitated him is expressed, but *alter idem*, in a manner totally new. The expression is organic, or, the new type which things themselves take when liberated. As, in the sun, objects paint their images on the retina of the eye, so they, sharing the aspiration of the whole universe, tend to paint a far more delicate copy of their essence in his mind. Like the metamorphosis of things into higher organic forms, is their change into melodies. Over everything stands its daemon, or soul, and, as the form of the thing is reflected by the eye, so the soul of the thing is reflected by a melody. The sea, the mountain-ridge, Niagara, and every flower-bed, pre-exist, or super-exist, in pre-cantations, which sail like odors in the air, and when any man goes by with an ear sufficiently fine, he overhears them, and endeavors to write down the notes, without diluting or depraving them. And herein is the legitimation of criticism, in the mind's faith, that the poems are a corrupt version of some text in nature, with which they ought to be made to tally. A rhyme in one of our sonnets should not be less pleasing than the iterated notes of a sea-shell, or the resembling difference of a group of flowers. The pairing of the birds is an idyl, not tedious as our idyls are; a tempest is a rough ode, without falsehood or rant: a summer, with its harvest sown, reaped, and stored, is an epic song, subordinating how many admirably executed parts. Why should not the symmetry and truth that modulate these, glide into our spirits, and we participate the invention of nature?

This insight, which expresses itself by what is called Imagination, is a very high sort of seeing, which does not come by study, but by the intellect being where and what it sees, by sharing the path, or circuit of things through forms, and so making them translucent to others. The path of things is silent. Will they suffer a speaker to go with them? A spy they will not suffer; a lover, a poet, is the transcendency of their own nature, — him they will suffer. The condition of true naming, on the poet's part, is his resigning himself to the divine *aura* which breathes through forms, and accompanying that.

It is a secret which every intellectual man quickly learns, that, beyond the energy of his possessed and conscious intellect, he is capable of a new energy (as of an intellect doubled on itself), by abandonment to the nature of things; that, beside his privacy of power as an individual man, there is a great public power, on which he can draw, by unlocking, at all risks, his human doors, and suffering the ethereal tides to roll and circulate through him: then he is caught up into the life of the Universe, his speech is thunder, his thought is law, and his words are universally

intelligible as the plants and animals. THE POET knows that he speaks adequately, then, only when he speaks somewhat wildly, or, "with the flower of the mind;" not with the intellect, used as an organ, but with the intellect released from all service, and suffered to take its direction from its celestial life; or, as the ancients were wont to express themselves, not with intellect alone, but with the intellect inebriated by nectar. As the traveller who has lost his way, throws his reins on his horse's neck, and trusts to the instinct of the animal to find his road, so must we do with the divine animal who carries us through this world. For if in any manner we can stimulate this instinct, new passages are opened for us into nature, the mind flows into and through things hardest and highest, and the metamorphosis is possible.

This is the reason why bards love wine, mead, narcotics, coffee, tea, opium, the fumes of sandal-wood and tobacco, or whatever other species of animal exhilaration. All men avail themselves of such means as they can, to add this extraordinary power to their normal powers; and to this end they prize conversation, music, pictures, sculpture, dancing, theatres, travelling, war, mobs, fires, gaming, politics, or love, or science, or animal intoxication, which are several coarser or finer *quasi*-mechanical substitutes for the true nectar, which is the ravishment of the intellect by coming nearer to the fact. These are auxiliaries to the centrifugal tendency of a man, to his passage out into free space, and they help him to escape the custody of that body in which he is pent up, and of that jail-yard of individual relations in which he is enclosed. Hence a great number of such as were professionally expressors of Beauty, as painters, poets, musicians, and actors, have been more than others wont to lead a life of pleasure and indulgence; all but the few who received the true nectar; and, as it was a spurious mode of attaining freedom, as it was an emancipation not into the heavens, but into the freedom of baser places, they were punished for that advantage they won, by a dissipation and deterioration. But never can any advantage be taken of nature by a trick. The spirit of the world, the great calm presence of the creator, comes not forth to the sorceries of opium or of wine. The sublime vision comes to the pure and simple soul in a clean and chaste body. That is not an inspiration which we owe to narcotics, but some counterfeit excitement and fury. Milton says, that the lyric poet may drink wine and live generously, but the epic poet, he who shall sing of the gods, and their descent unto men, must drink water out of a wooden bowl. For poetry is not 'Devil's wine,' but God's wine. It is with this as it is with toys. We fill the hands and nurseries of our children with all manner of dolls, drums, and horses, withdrawing their eyes from the plain face and sufficing objects of nature, the sun, and moon, the animals, the water, and stones, which should be their toys. [ie Gaudi] So the poet's habit of living should be set on a key so low and plain, that the common influences should delight him. His cheerfulness should be the gift of the sunlight; the air should suffice for his inspiration, and he should be tipsy with water. That spirit which suffices quiet hearts, which seems to come forth to such from every dry knoll of sere grass, from every pine-stump, and half-imbedded stone, on which the dull March sun shines, comes forth to the poor and hungry, and such as are of simple taste. If thou fill thy brain with Boston and New York, with fashion and covetousness, and wilt stimulate thy jaded senses with wine and French coffee, thou shalt find no radiance of wisdom in the lonely waste of the pinewoods.

If the imagination intoxicates the poet, it is not inactive in other men. The metamorphosis excites in the beholder an emotion of joy. The use of symbols has a certain power of emancipation and exhilaration for all men. We seem to be touched by a wand, which makes us dance and run about happily, like children. We are like persons who come out of a cave or cellar into the open air. This is the effect on us of tropes, fables, oracles, and all poetic forms. Poets are thus liberating gods. Men have really got a new sense, and found within their world, another world, or nest of worlds; for, the metamorphosis once seen, we divine that it does not stop. I will not now consider how much this makes the charm of algebra and the mathematics, which also have their tropes, but it is felt in every definition; as, when Aristotle defines *space* to be an immovable vessel, in which things are contained; — or, when Plato defines a *line* to be a flowing point; or, *figure* to be a bound of solid; and many the like. What a joyful sense of freedom we have, when Vitruvius announces the old opinion of artists, that no architect can build any house well, who does not know something of anatomy. When Socrates, in Charmides, tells us that the soul is cured of its maladies by certain incantations, and that these incantations are beautiful reasons, from which temperance is generated in souls; when Plato calls the world an animal; and Timaeus affirms that the plants also are animals; or affirms a man to be a heavenly tree, growing with his root, which is his head, upward; and, as George Chapman, following him, writes, —

"So in our tree of man, whose nerve root  
Springs in his top;"

when Orpheus speaks of hoariness as "that white flower which marks extreme old age;" when Proclus calls the universe the statue of the intellect; when Chaucer, in his praise of 'Gentilesse,' compares good blood in mean condition to fire, which, though carried to the darkest house betwixt this and the mount of Caucasus, will yet hold its natural office, and burn as bright as if twenty thousand men did it behold; when John saw, in the apocalypse, the ruin of the world through evil, and the stars fall from heaven, as the figtree casteth her untimely fruit; when Aesop reports the whole catalogue of common daily relations through the masquerade of birds and beasts; — we take the cheerful hint of the immortality of our essence, and its versatile habit and escapes, as when the gypsies say, "it is in vain to hang them, they cannot die."

The poets are thus liberating gods. The ancient British bards had for the title of their order, "Those who are free throughout the world." They are free, and they make free. An imaginative book renders us much more service at first, by stimulating us through its tropes, than afterward, when we arrive at the precise sense of the author. I think nothing is of any value in books, excepting the transcendental and extraordinary. If a man is inflamed and carried away by his thought, to that degree that he forgets the authors and the public, and heeds only this one dream, which holds him like an insanity, let me read his paper, and you may have all the arguments and histories and criticism. All the value which attaches to Pythagoras, Paracelsus, Cornelius Agrippa, Cardan, Kepler, Swedenborg, Schelling, Oken, or any other who introduces questionable facts into his cosmogony, as angels, devils, magic, astrology, palmistry,

mesmerism, and so on, is the certificate we have of departure from routine, and that here is a new witness. That also is the best success in conversation, the magic of liberty, which puts the world, like a ball, in our hands. How cheap even the liberty then seems; how mean to study, when an emotion communicates to the intellect the power to sap and upheave nature: how great the perspective! nations, times, systems, enter and disappear, like threads in tapestry of large figure and many colors; dream delivers us to dream, and, while the drunkenness lasts, we will sell our bed, our philosophy, our religion, in our opulence.

There is good reason why we should prize this liberation. The fate of the poor shepherd, who, blinded and lost in the snow-storm, perishes in a drift within a few feet of his cottage door, is an emblem of the state of man. On the brink of the waters of life and truth, we are miserably dying. The inaccessibility of every thought but that we are in, is wonderful. What if you come near to it, — you are as remote, when you are nearest, as when you are farthest. Every thought is also a prison; every heaven is also a prison. Therefore we love the poet, the inventor, who in any form, whether in an ode, or in an action, or in looks and behavior, has yielded us a new thought. He unlocks our chains, and admits us to a new scene.

This emancipation is dear to all men, and the power to impart it, as it must come from greater depth and scope of thought, is a measure of intellect. Therefore all books of the imagination endure, all which ascend to that truth, that the writer sees nature beneath him, and uses it as his exponent. Every verse or sentence, possessing this virtue, will take care of its own immortality. The religions of the world are the ejaculations of a few imaginative men.

But the quality of the imagination is to flow, and not to freeze. The poet did not stop at the color, or the form, but read their meaning; neither may he rest in this meaning, but he makes the same objects exponents of his new thought. Here is the difference betwixt the poet and the mystic, that the last nails a symbol to one sense, which was a true sense for a moment, but soon becomes old and false. For all symbols are fluxional; all language is vehicular and transitive, and is good, as ferries and horses are, for conveyance, not as farms and houses are, for homestead. Mysticism consists in the mistake of an accidental and individual symbol for an universal one. The morning-redness happens to be the favorite meteor to the eyes of Jacob Behmen, and comes to stand to him for truth and faith; and he believes should stand for the same realities to every reader. But the first reader prefers as naturally the symbol of a mother and child, or a gardener and his bulb, or a jeweller polishing a gem. Either of these, or of a myriad more, are equally good to the person to whom they are significant. Only they must be held lightly, and be very willingly translated into the equivalent terms which others use. [beg of relativism as way of thought?] And the mystic must be steadily told, — All that you say is just as true without the tedious use of that symbol as with it. Let us have a little algebra, instead of this trite rhetoric, — universal signs, instead of these village symbols, — and we shall both be gainers. The history of

hierarchies seems to show, that all religious error consisted in making the symbol too stark and solid, and, at last, nothing but an excess of the organ of language.

Swedenborg, of all men in the recent ages, stands eminently for the translator of nature into thought. I do not know the man in history to whom things stood so uniformly for words. Before him the metamorphosis continually plays. Everything on which his eye rests, obeys the impulses of moral nature. The figs become grapes whilst he eats them. When some of his angels affirmed a truth, the laurel twig which they held blossomed in their hands. The noise which, at a distance, appeared like gnashing and thumping, on coming nearer was found to be the voice of disputants. The men, in one of his visions, seen in heavenly light, appeared like dragons, and seemed in darkness: but, to each other, they appeared as men, and, when the light from heaven shone into their cabin, they complained of the darkness, and were compelled to shut the window that they might see.

There was this perception in him, which makes the poet or seer, an object of awe and terror, namely, that the same man, or society of men, may wear one aspect to themselves and their companions, and a different aspect to higher intelligences. Certain priests, whom he describes as conversing very learnedly together, appeared to the children, who were at some distance, like dead horses: and many the like misappearances. And instantly the mind inquires, whether these fishes under the bridge, yonder oxen in the pasture, those dogs in the yard, are immutably fishes, oxen, and dogs, or only so appear to me, and perchance to themselves appear upright men; and whether I appear as a man to all eyes. The Bramins and Pythagoras propounded the same question, and if any poet has witnessed the transformation, he doubtless found it in harmony with various experiences. We have all seen changes as considerable in wheat and caterpillars. He is the poet, and shall draw us with love and terror, who sees, through the flowing vest, the firm nature, and can declare it.

I look in vain for the poet whom I describe. We do not, with sufficient plainness, or sufficient profoundness, address ourselves to life, nor dare we chaunt our own times and social circumstance. If we filled the day with bravery, we should not shrink from celebrating it. Time and nature yield us many gifts, but not yet the timely man, the new religion, the reconciler, whom all things await. Dante's praise is, that he dared to write his autobiography in colossal cipher, or into universality. We have yet had no genius in America, with tyrannous eye, which knew the value of our incomparable materials, and saw, in the barbarism and materialism of the times, another carnival of the same gods whose picture he so much admires in Homer; then in the middle age; then in Calvinism. Banks and tariffs, the newspaper and caucus, methodism and unitarianism, are flat and dull to dull people, but rest on the same foundations of wonder as the town of Troy, and the temple of Delphos, and are as swiftly passing away. Our logrolling, our stumps and their politics, our fisheries, our Negroes, and Indians, our boasts, and our repudiations, the wrath of rogues, and the pusillanimity of honest men, the northern trade, the southern planting, the western clearing, Oregon, and Texas, are yet unsung. Yet America is a

poem in our eyes; its ample geography dazzles the imagination, and it will not wait long for metres. If I have not found that excellent combination of gifts in my countrymen which I seek, neither could I aid myself to fix the idea of the poet by reading now and then in Chalmers's collection of five centuries of English poets. These are wits, more than poets, though there have been poets among them. But when we adhere to the ideal of the poet, we have our difficulties even with Milton and Homer. Milton is too literary, and Homer too literal and historical.

But I am not wise enough for a national criticism, and must use the old largeness a little longer, to discharge my errand from the muse to the poet concerning his art.

Art is the path of the creator to his work. The paths, or methods, are ideal and eternal, though few men ever see them, not the artist himself for years, or for a lifetime, unless he come into the conditions. The painter, the sculptor, the composer, the epic rhapsodist, the orator, all partake one desire, namely, to express themselves symmetrically and abundantly, not dwarfishly and fragmentarily. They found or put themselves in certain conditions, as, the painter and sculptor before some impressive human figures; the orator, into the assembly of the people; and the others, in such scenes as each has found exciting to his intellect; and each presently feels the new desire. He hears a voice, he sees a beckoning. Then he is apprised, with wonder, what herds of daemons hem him in. He can no more rest; he says, with the old painter, "By God, it is in me, and must go forth of me." He pursues a beauty, half seen, which flies before him. The poet pours out verses in every solitude. Most of the things he says are conventional, no doubt; but by and by he says something which is original and beautiful. That charms him. He would say nothing else but such things. In our way of talking, we say, 'That is yours, this is mine;' but the poet knows well that it is not his; that it is as strange and beautiful to him as to you; he would fain hear the like eloquence at length. Once having tasted this immortal ichor, he cannot have enough of it, and, as an admirable creative power exists in these intellections, it is of the last importance that these things get spoken. What a little of all we know is said! What drops of all the sea of our science are baled up! and by what accident it is that these are exposed, when so many secrets sleep in nature! Hence the necessity of speech and song; hence these throbs and heart-beatings in the orator, at the door of the assembly, to the end, namely, that thought may be ejaculated as Logos, or Word.

Doubt not, O poet, but persist. Say, 'It is in me, and shall out.' Stand there, baulked and dumb, stuttering and stammering, hissed and hooted, stand and strive, until, at last, rage draw out of thee that *dream*-power which every night shows thee is thine own; a power transcending all limit and privacy, and by virtue of which a man is the conductor of the whole river of electricity. Nothing walks, or creeps, or grows, or exists, which must not in turn arise and walk before him as exponent of his meaning. Comes he to that power, his genius is no longer exhaustible. All the creatures, by pairs and by tribes, pour into his mind as into a Noah's ark, to come forth again to people a new world. This is like the stock of air for our respiration, or for the combustion of our fireplace, not a measure of gallons, but the entire atmosphere if wanted. And therefore the rich



poets, as Homer, Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Raphael, have obviously no limits to their works, except the limits of their lifetime, and resemble a mirror carried through the street, ready to render an image of every created thing.

O poet! a new nobility is conferred in groves and pastures, and not in castles, or by the sword-blade, any longer. The conditions are hard, but equal. Thou shalt leave the world, and know the muse only. Thou shalt not know any longer the times, customs, graces, politics, or opinions of men, but shalt take all from the muse. For the time of towns is tolled from the world by funereal chimes, but in nature the universal hours are counted by succeeding tribes of animals and plants, and by growth of joy on joy. God wills also that thou abdicate a manifold and duplex life, and that thou be content that others speak for thee. Others shall be thy gentlemen, and shall represent all courtesy and worldly life for thee; others shall do the great and resounding actions also. Thou shalt lie close hid with nature, and canst not be afforded to the Capitol or the Exchange. The world is full of renunciations and apprenticeships, and this is thine: thou must pass for a fool and a churl for a long season. This is the screen and sheath in which Pan has protected his well-beloved flower, and thou shalt be known only to thine own, and they shall console thee with tenderest love. And thou shalt not be able to rehearse the names of thy friends in thy verse, for an old shame before the holy ideal. And this is the reward: that the ideal shall be real to thee, and the impressions of the actual world shall fall like summer rain, copious, but not troublesome, to thy invulnerable essence. Thou shalt have the whole land for thy park and manor, the sea for thy bath and navigation, without tax and without envy; the woods and the rivers thou shalt own; and thou shalt possess that wherein others are only tenants and boarders. Thou true land-lord! sea-lord! air-lord! Wherever snow falls, or water flows, or birds fly, wherever day and night meet in twilight, wherever the blue heaven is hung by clouds, or sown with stars, wherever are forms with transparent boundaries, wherever are outlets into celestial space, wherever is danger, and awe, and love, there is Beauty, plenteous as rain, shed for thee, and though thou shouldst walk the world over, thou shalt not be able to find a condition inopportune or ignoble.

### Appendix 3

Thomas Wentworth Higginson [1823-1911]

“Letter to a Young Contributor” / Atlantic Monthly / April 1862

My dear young gentleman or young lady, —for many are the Cecil Dreemes of literature who superscribe their offered manuscripts with very masculine names in very feminine handwriting, —it seems wrong not to meet your accumulated and urgent epistles with one comprehensive reply, thus condensing many private letters into a printed one. And so large a proportion of "Atlantic" readers either might, would, could, or should be "Atlantic" contributors also, that this epistle will be sure of perusal, though Mrs. Stowe remain uncut and the Autocrat go for an hour without readers.

Far from me be the wild expectation that every author will not habitually measure the merits of a periodical by its appreciation of his or her last manuscript. I should as soon ask a young lady not to estimate the management of a ball by her own private luck in respect to partners. But it is worth while at least to point out that in the treatment of every contribution the real interests of editor and writer are absolutely the same, and any antagonism is merely traditional, like the supposed hostility between France and England, or between England and Slavery. No editor can ever afford the rejection of a good thing, and no author the publication of a bad one. The only difficulty lies in drawing the line. Were all offered manuscripts unequivocally good or bad, there would be no great trouble; it is the vast range of mediocrity which perplexes: the majority are too bad for blessing and too good for banning; so that no conceivable reason can be given for either fate, save that upon the destiny of any single one may hang that of a hundred

But whatever be the standard fixed, it is equally for the interest of all concerned that it be enforced without flinching.

Nor is there the slightest foundation for the supposed editorial prejudice against new or obscure contributors. On the contrary, every editor is always hungering and thirsting after novelties. To take the lead in bringing forward a new genius is as fascinating a privilege as that of the physician who boasted to Sir Henry Hallford of having been the first man to discover the Asiatic cholera and to communicate it to the public. It is only stern necessity which compels the magazine to fall back so constantly on the regular old staff of contributors, whose average product has been gauged already; just as every country-lyceum attempts annually to arrange an entirely new list of lecturers, and ends with no bolder experiment than to substitute Chapin and Beecher in place of last year's Beecher and Chapin.

Of course no editor is infallible, and the best magazine contains an occasional poor article. Do not blame the unfortunate conductor. He knows it as well as you do, - after the deed is done. The newspapers kindly pass it over, still preparing their accustomed opiate of sweet praises, so much for each contributor, so much for the magazine collectively, — like a hostess with her tea-making, a spoonful for each person and one for the pot. But I can tell you that there is an official person who meditates and groans, meanwhile, in the night-watches, to think that in some atrocious moment of good-nature or sleepiness he left the door open and let that ungainly

intruder in. Do you expect him to acknowledge the blunder, when you tax him with it? Never, - he feels it too keenly. He rather stands up stoutly for the surpassing merits of the misshapen thing, as a mother for her deformed child; and as the mother is nevertheless inwardly imploring that there may never be such another born to her, so be sure that it is not by reminding the editor of this calamity that you can allure him into risking a repetition of it.

An editor thus shows himself to be but human; and it is well enough to remember this fact, when you approach him. He is not a gloomy despot, no Nemesis, or Rhadamanthus, but a bland and virtuous man, exceedingly anxious to secure plenty of good subscribers and contributors, and very ready to perform any acts of kindness not inconsistent with this grand design. Draw near him, therefore, with soft approaches and mild persuasions. Do not treat him like an enemy, and insist on reading your whole manuscript aloud to him, with appropriate gestures. His time has some value, if yours has not; and he has therefore educated his eye till it has become microscopic, like a naturalist's, and can classify nine out of ten specimens by one glance at a scale or a feather. Fancy an ambitious echinoderm claiming a private interview with Agassiz, to demonstrate by verbal arguments that he is a mollusk! Besides, do you expect to administer the thing orally to each of the two hundred thousand, more or less, who turn the leaves of the "Atlantic"? You are writing for the average eye, and must submit to its verdict. "Do not trouble yourself about the light on your statue; it is the light of the public square which must test its value."

Do not despise any honest propitiation, however small, in dealing with your editor. Look to the physical aspect of your manuscript, and prepare your page so neatly that it shall allure instead of repelling. Use good pens, black ink, nice white paper and plenty of it. Do not emulate "paper-sparing Pope," whose chaotic manuscript of the "Iliad," written chiefly on the backs of old letters, still remains in the British Museum. If your document be slovenly, the presumption is that its literary execution is the same, Pope to the contrary notwithstanding. An editor's eye becomes carnal, and is easily attracted by a comely outside. If you really wish to obtain his goodwill for your production, do not first tax his time for deciphering it, any more than in visiting a millionaire to solicit a loan you would begin by asking him to pay for the hire of the carriage which takes you to his door.

On the same principle, send your composition in such a shape that it shall not need the slightest literary revision before printing. Many a bright production dies discarded which might have been made thoroughly presentable by a single day's labor of a competent scholar, in shaping, smoothing, dovetailing, and retrenching. The revision seems so slight an affair that the aspirant cannot conceive why there should be so much fuss about it.

"The piece, you think, is incorrect; why, take it; I 'm all submission; what you 'd have it, make it."

But to discharge that friendly office no universal genius is salaried; and for intellect in the rough there is no market.

Rules for style, as for manners, must be chiefly negative: a positively good style indicates certain natural powers in the individual, but an unexceptionable style is merely a matter of culture and

good models. Dr. Channing established in New England a standard of style which really attained almost the perfection of the pure and the colorless, and the disciplinary value of such a literary influence, in a raw and crude nation, has been very great; but the defect of this standard is that it ends in utterly renouncing all the great traditions of literature, and ignoring the magnificent mystery of words. Human language may be polite and powerless in itself, uplifted with difficulty into expression by the high thoughts it utters, or it may in itself become so saturated with warm life and delicious association that every sentence shall palpitate and thrill with the mere fascination of the syllables. The statue is not more surely included in the block of marble than is all conceivable splendor of utterance in "Worcester's Unabridged." And as RUSKIN says of painting that it is in the perfection and precision of the instantaneous line that the claim to immortality is made, so it is easy to see that a phrase may outweigh a library. Keats heads the catalogue of things real with "sun, moon, and passages of Shakspeare"; and Keats himself has left behind him winged wonders of expression which are not surpassed by Shakspeare, or by any one else who ever dared touch the English tongue. There may be phrases which shall be palaces to dwell in, treasure-houses to explore; a single word may be a window from which one may perceive all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them. Oftentimes a word shall speak what accumulated volumes have labored in vain to utter: there may be years of crowded passion in a word, and half a life in a sentence.

Such being the majesty of the art you seek to practise, you can at least take time and deliberation before dishonoring it. Disabuse yourself especially of the belief that any grace or flow of style can come from writing rapidly. Haste can make you slipshod, but it can never make you graceful. With what dismay one reads of the wonderful fellows in fashionable novels, who can easily dash off a brilliant essay in a single night! When I think how slowly my poor thoughts come in, how tardily they connect themselves, what a delicious prolonged perplexity it is to cut and contrive a decent clothing of words for them, as a little girl does for her doll, — nay, how many new outfits a single sentence sometimes costs before it is presentable, till it seems at last, like our army on the Potomac, as if it never could be thoroughly clothed, — I certainly should never dare to venture into print, but for the confirmed suspicion that the greatest writers have done even so. I can hardly believe that there is any autograph in the world so precious or instructive as that scrap of paper, still preserved at Ferrara, on which REVISING Ariosto wrote in sixteen different revisions one of his most famous stanzas. Do you know, my dear neophyte, how Balzac used to compose? As a specimen of the labor that sometimes goes to make an effective style, the process is worth recording. When Balzac had a new work in view, he first spent weeks in studying from real life for it, haunting the streets of Paris by day... and night, note-book in hand. His materials gained, he shut himself up till the book was written, perhaps two months, absolutely excluding everybody but his publisher. He emerged pale and thin, with the complete manuscript in his hand, not only written, but almost rewritten, so thoroughly was the original copy altered, interlined, and rearranged. This strange production, almost illegible, was sent to the unfortunate printers; with infinite difficulty a proof-sheet was obtained, which, being sent to the author, was presently returned in almost as hopeless a chaos of corrections as the manuscript first submitted. Whole sentences were erased, others transposed, everything modified. A second and a third followed, alike torn to pieces by the ravenous pen of Balzac. The despairing printers labored by turns, only the picked men of the office being equal to the task, and they relieving each other at hourly intervals, as beyond that time no one could endure the fatigue. At last, by the fourth proof-sheet, the author too was wearied out, though not contented.

"I work ten hours out of the twenty-four," said he, "over the elaboration of my unhappy style, and I am never satisfied, myself, when all is done."

Do not complain that this scrupulousness is probably wasted, after all, and that nobody knows. The public knows. People criticize higher than they attain. When the Athenian audience hissed a public speaker for a mispronunciation, it did not follow that any one of the malcontents could pronounce as well as the orator. In our own lyceum-audiences there may not be a man who does not yield to his own private eccentricities of dialect, but see if they do not appreciate elegant English from Phillips or Everett! Men talk of writing down to the public taste who have never yet written up to that standard. "There never yet was a good tongue," said old Fuller, "that wanted ears to hear it." If one were expecting to be judged by a few scholars only, one might hope somehow to cajole them; but it is this vast, unimpassioned, unconscious tribunal, this average judgment of intelligent minds, which is truly formidable, — something more undying than senates and more omnipotent than courts, something which rapidly cancels all transitory reputations, and at last becomes the organ of eternal justice and infallibly awards posthumous fame.

The first demand made by the public upon every composition is, of course, that it should be attractive. In addressing a miscellaneous audience, whether through eye or ear, it is certain that no man living has a right to be tedious. Every editor is therefore compelled to insist that his contributors should make themselves agreeable, whatever else they may do. To be agreeable, it is not necessary to be amusing; an essay may be thoroughly delightful without a single witticism, while a monotone of jokes soon grows tedious. Charge your style with life, and the public will not ask for conundrums. But the profounder your discourse, the greater must necessarily be the effort to refresh and diversify. I have observed, in addressing audiences of children in schools and elsewhere, that there is no fact so grave, no thought so abstract, but you can make it very interesting to the small people, if you will only put in plenty of detail and illustration; and I have not observed that in this respect grown men are so very different. If, therefore, in writing, you find it your mission to be abstruse, fight to render your statement clear and attractive, as if your life depended on it: your literary life does depend on it, and, if you fail, relapses into a dead language, and becomes, like that of Coleridge, only a *Biographia Literaria*. Labor, therefore, not in thought alone, but in utterance; clothe and reclothe your grand conception twenty times, until you find some phrase that with its grandeur shall be lucid also. It is this unwearied literary patience that has enabled Emerson not merely to introduce, but even to popularize, thoughts of such a quality as never reached the popular mind before. And when such a writer, thus laborious to do his utmost for his disciples, becomes after all incomprehensible, we can try to believe that it is only that inevitable obscurity of vast thought which Coleridge said was a compliment to the reader.

In learning to write availablely, a newspaper-office is a capital preparatory school. Nothing is so good to teach the use of materials, and to compel to pungency of style. Being always at close quarters with his readers, a journalist must shorten and sharpen his sentences, or he is doomed. Yet this mental alertness is bought at a severe price; such living from hand to mouth cheapens the whole mode of intellectual existence, and it would seem that no successful journalist could ever get the newspaper out of his blood, or achieve any high literary success.

For purposes of illustration and elucidation, and even for amplitude of vocabulary, wealth of accumulated materials is essential; and whether this wealth be won by reading or by experience makes no great difference. Coleridge attended Davy's chemical lectures to acquire new metaphors, and it is of no consequence whether one comes to literature from a library, a machine-shop, or a fore-castle, provided he has learned to work with thoroughness the soil he knows. After all is said and done, however, books remain the chief quarries. Johnson declared, putting the thing perhaps too mechanically, "The greater part of an author's time is spent in reading in order to write; a man will turn over half a library to make one book." Addison collected three folios of materials before publishing the first number of the "Spectator." Remember, however, that copious preparation has its perils also, in the crude display to which it tempts. The object of high culture is not to exhibit culture, but its results. You do not put guano on your garden that your garden may blossom guano. Indeed, even for the proper subordination of one's own thoughts the same self-control is needed; and there is no severer test of literary training than in the power to prune out one's most cherished sentence, when it grows obvious that the sacrifice will help the symmetry or vigor of the whole.

Be noble both in the affluence and the economy of your diction; spare no wealth that you can put in, and tolerate no superfluity that can be struck out. Remember the Lacedaemonian who was fined for saying that in three words which might as well have been expressed in two. Do not throw a dozen vague epithets at a thing, in the hope that some one of them will fit; but study each phrase so carefully that the most ingenious critic cannot alter it without spoiling the whole passage for everybody but himself. For the same reason do not take refuge, as was the practice a few years since, in German combinations, heart-utterances, soul-sentiments, and hyphenized phrases generally; but roll your thought into one good English word. There is no fault which seems so hopeless as commonplaceness, but it is really easier to elevate the commonplace than to reduce the turgid. How few men in all the pride of culture can emulate the easy grace of a bright woman's letter!

Have faith enough in your own individuality to keep it resolutely down for a year or two. A man has not much intellectual capital who cannot treat himself to a brief interval of modesty. Premature individualism commonly ends either in a reaction against the original whims, or in a mannerism which perpetuates them. For mannerism no one is great enough, because, though in the hands of a strong man it imprisons us in novel fascination, yet we soon grow weary, and then hate our prison forever. How sparkling was Reade's crisp brilliancy in "Peg Woffington"! — but into what disagreeable affectations it has since degenerated! Carlyle was a boon to the human race, amid the tameness into which English style was declining; but who is not tired of him and his catchwords now? He was the Jenner of our modern style, inoculating and saving us all by his quaint frank Germanism, then dying of his own disease. Now the age has outgrown him, and is approaching a mode of writing which unites the smoothness of the eighteenth century with the vital vigor of the seventeenth, so that Sir Thomas Browne and Andrew Marvell seem quite as near to us as Pope or Addison, — a style penetrated with the best spirit of Carlyle, without a trace of Carlylism.

Be neither too lax nor too precise in your use of language: the one fault ends in stiffness, the other in slang. Some one told the Emperor Tiberius that he might give citizenship to men, but not to words. To be sure, Louis XIV, in childhood, wishing for a carriage, called for mon carrosse,

and made the former feminine a masculine to all future Frenchmen. But do not undertake to exercise these prerogatives of royalty until you are quite sure of being crowned. The only thing I remember of our college text-book of Rhetoric is one admirable verse of caution which it quoted:

"In words, as fashions, the same rule will hold,  
Alike fantastic, if too new or old;  
Be not the first by whom the new are tried,  
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside."

Especially do not indulge any fantastic preference for either Latin or Anglo-Saxon, the two great wings on which our magnificent English soars and sings; we can spare neither. The combination gives us an affluence of synonymes and a delicacy of discrimination such as no unmixed idiom can show.

While you utterly shun slang, whether native— or foreign-born, — (at present, by the way, our popular writers use far less slang than the English,) —yet do not shrink from Americanisms, so they be good ones. American literature is now thoroughly out of leading-strings; and the nation which supplied the first appreciative audience for Carlyle, Tennyson, and the Brownings, can certainly trust its own literary instincts to create the new words it needs. To be sure, the inelegancies with which we are chiefly reproached are not distinctively American: Burke uses "pretty considerable"; Miss Burney says, "I trembled a few"; the English Bible says "reckon," Locke has "guess," and Southey "realize," in the exact senses in which one sometimes hears them used colloquially here. Nevertheless such improprieties are of course to be avoided; but whatever good Americanisms exist, let us hold to them by all means. The diction of Emerson alone is a sufficient proof, by its unequalled range and precision, that no people in the world ever had access to a vocabulary so rich and copious as we are acquiring. To the previous traditions and associations of the English tongue we add resources of contemporary life such as England cannot rival. Political freedom makes every man an individual; vast industrial activity makes every man an inventor, not merely of labor-saving machines, but of labor-saving words; universal schooling popularizes all thought and sharpens the edge of all language. We unconsciously demand of our writers the same dash and the same accuracy which we demand in railroading or dry-goods-jobbing. The mixture of nationalities is constantly coining and exchanging new felicities of dialect: Ireland, Scotland, Germany, Africa are present everywhere with their various contributions of wit and shrewdness, thought and geniality; in New York and elsewhere one finds whole thoroughfares of France, Italy, Spain, Portugal; on our Western railways there are placards printed in Swedish; even China is creeping in. The colonies of England are too far and too provincial to have had much reflex influence on her literature, but how our phraseology is already amplified by our relations with Spanish America! The life-blood of Mexico flowed into our newspapers while the war was in progress; and the gold of California glitters in our primers. Many foreign cities may show a greater variety of mere national costumes, but the representative value of our immigrant tribes is far greater from the very fact that they merge their mental costume in ours. Thus the American writer finds himself among his phrases like an American sea-captain amid his crew: a medley of all nations, waiting for the strong organizing New England mind to mould them into a unit of force.

There are certain minor matters, subsidiary to elegance, if not elegancies, and therefore worth attention. Do not habitually prop your sentences on crutches, such as Italics and exclamation points, but make them stand without aid; if they cannot emphasize themselves, these devices are commonly but a confession of helplessness. Do not leave loose ends as you go on, straggling things, to be caught up and dragged along uneasily in footnotes, but work them all in neatly, as Bidly at her bread-pan gradually kneads in all the outlying bits of dough, till she has one round and comely mass. Reduce yourself to short allowance of parentheses and dashes if you employ them merely from clumsiness, they will lose all their proper power in your hands. Economize quotation-marks also, clear that dust from your pages, assume your readers to be acquainted with the current jokes and the stock epithets: all persons like the compliment of having it presumed that they know something, and prefer to discover the wit or beauty of your allusion without a guideboard.

The same principle applies to learned citations and the results of study. Knead these thoroughly in, supplying the maximum of desired information with a minimum of visible schoolmaster. It requires no pedantic mention of Euclid to indicate a mathematical mind, but only the habitual use of clear terms and close connections. To employ in argument the forms of Whately's Logic would render it probable that you are juvenile and certain that you are tedious; wreath the chain with roses. The more you have studied foreign languages, the more you will be disposed to keep Ollendorff in the background: the proper result of such acquirements is visible in a finer ear for words; so that Goethe said, the man who had studied but one language could not know that one. But spare the raw material; deal as cautiously in Latin as did General Jackson when Jack Downing was out of the way; and avoid French as some fashionable novelists avoid English.

Thus far, these are elementary and rather technical suggestions, fitted for the very opening of your literary career. Supposing you fairly in print, there are needed some further counsels.

Do not waste a minute, not a second, in trying to demonstrate to others the merit of your own performance. If your work does not vindicate itself, you cannot vindicate it, but you can labor steadily on to something which needs no advocate but itself. It was said of Haydon, the English artist, that, if he had taken half the pains to paint great pictures that he took to persuade the public he had painted them, his fame would have been secure. Similar was the career of poor Home, who wrote the farthing epic of "Orion" with one grand line in it, and a prose work without any, on "The False Medium excluding Men of Genius from the Public." He spent years in ineffectually trying to repeal the exclusion in his own case, and has since manfully gone to the grazing regions in Australia, hoping there at least to find the sheep and the goats better discriminated. Do not emulate these tragedies. Remember how many great writers have created the taste by which they were enjoyed, and do not be in a hurry. Toughen yourself a little, and perform something better. Inscribe above your desk the words of Rivarol, "Genius is only great patience." It takes less time to build an avenue of shingle palaces than to hide away unseen, block by block, the vast foundation-stones of an observatory. Most bygone literary fames have been very short-lived in America, because they have lasted no longer than they deserved. Happening the other day to recur to a list of Cambridge lyceum-lecturers in my boyish days, I find with dismay that the only name now popularly remembered is that of Emerson: death, oblivion, or a professorship has closed over all the rest, while the whole standard of American literature has been vastly raised meanwhile, and no doubt partly through their labors. To this day,



some of our most gifted writers are being dwarfed by the unkind friendliness of too early praise. It was Keats, the most precocious of all great poets, the stock victim of critical assassination, — though the charge does him utter injustice, —who declared that "nothing is finer for purposes of production than a very gradual ripening of the intellectual powers."

Yet do not be made conceited by obscurity, any more than by notoriety. Many fine geniuses have been long neglected; but what would become of us, if all the neglected were to turn out geniuses? It is unsafe reasoning from either extreme. You are not necessarily writing like Holmes because your reputation for talent began in college, nor like Hawthorne because you have been before the public ten years without an admirer. Above all, do not seek to encourage yourself by dwelling on the defects of your rivals: strength comes only from what is above you. Northcote, the painter, said, that, in observing an inferior picture, he always felt his spirits droop, with the suspicion that perhaps he deceived himself and his own paintings were no better; but the works of the mighty masters always gave him renewed strength, in the hope that perhaps his own had in their smaller way something of the same divine quality.

Do not complacently imagine, because your first literary attempt proved good and successful, that your second will doubtless improve upon it. The very contrary sometimes happens. A man dreams for years over one projected composition, all his reading converges to it, all his experience stands related to it, it is the net result of his existence up to a certain time, it is the cistern into which he pours his accumulated life. Emboldened by success, he mistakes the cistern for a fountain, and instantly taps his brain again. The second production, as compared with the first, costs but half the pains and attains but a quarter part of the merit; a little more of fluency and facility perhaps, —but the vigor, the wealth, the originality, the head of water, in short, are wanting. One would think that almost any intelligent man might write one good thing in a lifetime, by reserving himself long enough: it is the effort after quantity which proves destructive. The greatest man has passed his zenith, when he once begins to cheapen his style of work and sink into a bookmaker: after that, though the newspapers may never hint at it, nor his admirers own it, the decline of his career is begun.

Yet the author is not alone to blame for this, but also the world which first tempts and then reproves him. Goethe says, that, if a person once does a good thing, society forms a league to prevent his doing another. His seclusion is gone, and therefore his unconsciousness and his leisure; luxuries tempt him from his frugality, and soon he must toil for luxuries; then, because he has done one thing well, he is urged to squander himself and do a thousand things badly. In this country especially, if one can learn languages, he must go to Congress; if he can argue a case, he must become agent of a factory: out of this comes a variety of training which is very valuable, but a wise man must have strength to call in his resources before middle-life, prune off divergent activities, and concentrate himself on the main work, be it what it may. It is shameful to see the indeterminate lives of many of our gifted men, unable to resist the temptations of a busy land, and so losing themselves in an aimless and miscellaneous career.

Yet it is unjust and unworthy in Marsh to disfigure his fine work on the English language by traducing all who now write that tongue. "None seek the audience, fit, though few, which contented the ambition of Milton, and all writers for the press now measure their glory by their gains," and so indefinitely onward,—which is simply cant. Does Sylvanus Cobb, Jr., who

honestly earns his annual five thousand dollars from the "New York Ledger," take rank as head of American literature by virtue of his salary? Because the profits of true literature are rising, trivial as they still are beside those of commerce or the professions, its merits do not necessarily decrease, but the contrary is more likely to happen; for in this pursuit, as in all others, cheap work is usually poor work. None but gentlemen of fortune can enjoy the bliss of writing for nothing and paying their own printer. Nor does the practice of compensation by the page work the injury that has often been ignorantly predicted. No contributor need hope to cover two pages of a periodical with what might be adequately said in one, unless he assumes his editor to be as foolish as himself. The Spartans exiled Ctesiphon for bragging that he could speak the whole day on any subject selected; and a modern magazine is of little value, unless it has a Spartan at its head.

Strive always to remember — though it does not seem intended that we should quite bring it home to ourselves — that "To-Day is a king in disguise," and that this American literature of ours will be just as classic a thing, if we do our part, as any which the past has treasured. There is a mirage over all literary associations. Keats and Lamb seem to our young people to be existences as remote and legendary as Homer, yet it is not an old man's life since Keats was an awkward boy at the door of Hazlitt's lecture room, and Lamb was introducing Talfourd to Wordsworth as his own only admirer. In reading Spence's "Anecdotes," Pope and Addison appear no farther off; and wherever I open Bacon's "Essays," I am sure to end at last with that one magical sentence, annihilating centuries, "When I was a child, and Queen Elizabeth was in the flower of her years."

And this imperceptible transformation of the commonplace present into the storied past applies equally to the pursuits of war and to the serenest works of peace. Be not misled by the excitements of the moment into overrating the charms of military life. In this chaos of uniforms, we seem to be approaching times such as existed in England after Waterloo, when the splenetic Byron declared that the only distinction was to be a little undistinguished. No doubt, war brings out grand and unexpected qualities, and there is a perennial fascination in the Elizabethan Raleighs and Sidneys, alike heroes of pen and sword. But the fact is patent, that there is scarcely any art whose rudiments are so easy to acquire as the military; the manuals of tactics have no difficulties comparable to those of the ordinary professional text-books; and any one who can drill a boat's crew or a ball-club can learn in a very few weeks to drill a company or even a regiment. Given in addition the power to command, to organize, and to execute, — high qualities, though not rare in this community, and you have a man needing but time and experience to make a general. More than this can be acquired only by an exclusive absorption in this one art; as Napoleon said, that, to have good soldiers, a nation must be always at war.

If, therefore, duty and opportunity call, count it a privilege to obtain your share in the new career; throw yourself into it as resolutely and joyously as if it were a summer-campaign in the Adirondack, but never fancy for a moment that you have discovered any grander or manlier life than you might be leading every day at home. It is not needful here to decide which is intrinsically the better thing, a column of a newspaper or a column of attack, Wordsworth's "Lines on Immortality" or Wellington's Lines of Torres Vedras; each is noble, if nobly done, though posterity seems to remember literature the longest.

Once the poets and the sages were held to be pleasing triflers, fit for hours of relaxation in the lulls of war. Now the pursuits of peace are recognized as the real, and war as the accidental. It interrupts all higher avocations, as does the cry of fire: when the fire is extinguished, the important affairs of life are resumed. Six years ago the London "Times" was bewailing that all thought and culture in England were suspended by the Crimean War. "We want no more books. Give us good recruits, at least five feet seven, a good model for a floating-battery, and a gun to take effect at five thousand yards, — and Whigs and Tories, High and Low Church, the poets, astronomers, and critics, may settle it among themselves." How remote seems that epoch now! and how remote will the present soon appear! while art and science will resume their sway serene, beneath skies eternal. Yesterday I turned from treatises on gunnery and fortification to open Milton's Latin Poems, which I had never read, and there, in the "Sylvarum Liber," I came upon a passage as grand as anything in "Paradise Lost," — his description of Plato's archetypal man, the vast ideal of the human race, eternal, incorrupt, coeval with the stars, dwelling either in the sidereal spaces, or among the Lethean mansions of souls unborn, or pacing the unexplored confines of the habitable globe. There stood the majestic image, veiled in a dead language, yet stilt visible; and it was as if one of the poet's own sylvan groves had been suddenly cut down, and opened a view of Olympus. Then all these present fascinating trivialities of war and diplomacy ebbed away, like Greece and Rome before them, and there seemed nothing real in the universe but Plato's archetypal man.

Indeed, it is the same with all contemporary notorieties. In all free governments, especially, it is the habit to overrate the *dramatis personae* of the hour. [!!!] How empty to us are now the names of the great politicians of the last generation, as Crawford and Lowndes! — yet it is but a few years since these men filled in the public ear as large a space as Clay or Calhoun afterwards Calhoun afterwards, and when they died, the race of the giants was thought ended. The path to oblivion of these later idols is just as sure; even Webster will be to the next age but a mighty tradition, and all that he has left will seem no more commensurate with his fame than will his statue by Powers. If anything preserves the statesmen of to-day, it will be only because we are coming to a contest of more vital principles, which may better embalm the men. Of all gifts, eloquence is the most short-lived. The most accomplished orator fades forgotten, and his laurels pass to some hoarse, inaudible Burke, accounted rather a bore during his lifetime, and possessed of a faculty of scattering, not convincing, the members of the House. "After all," said the brilliant Choate, with melancholy foreboding. "a book is the only immortality."

So few men in any age are born with a marked gift for literary expression, so few of this number have access to high culture, so few even of these have the personal nobleness to use their powers well, and this small band is finally so decimated by disease and manifold disaster, that it makes one shudder to observe how little of the embodied intellect of any age is left behind. Literature is attar of roses, one distilled drop from a million blossoms. Think how Spain and Portugal once divided the globe between them in a treaty, when England was a petty kingdom of illiterate tribes! — and now all Spain is condensed for us into Cervantes, and all Portugal into the fading fame of the unread Camoens. The long magnificence of Italian culture has left us only *Quattro Poeti*, the Four Poets. The difference between Shakspeare and his contemporaries is not that he is read twice, ten times, a hundred times as much as they: it is an absolute difference; he is read, and they are only printed.

Yet, if our life be immortal, this temporary distinction is of little moment, and we may learn humility, without learning despair, from earth's evanescent glories. Who cannot bear a few disappointments, if the vista be so wide that the mute inglorious Miltons of this sphere may in some other sing their Paradise as Found? War or peace, fame or forgetfulness, can bring no real injury to one who has formed the fixed purpose to live nobly day by day. I fancy that in some other realm of existence we may look back with some kind interest on this scene of our earlier life, and say to one another, "Do you remember yonder planet, where once we went to school?" And whether our elective study here lay chiefly in the fields of action or of thought will matter little to us then, when other schools shall have led us through other disciplines.

## Appendix 4

William Douglas O'Connor [1832-1889]

O'Connor's essay first appeared as a free-standing pamphlet (New York: Bunce and Huntington, 1866). It later was reprinted as part of Richard Maurice Bucke's biography of Whitman, *Walt Whitman* (Philadelphia: David McKay, 1883).

### THE GOOD GRAY POET. A VINDICATION.

NINE weeks have elapsed since the commission of an outrage, to which I have not till now been able to give my attention, but which, in the interest of the sacred cause of free letters, and in that alone, I never meant should pass without its proper and enduring brand.

For years past, thousands of people in New York, in Brooklyn, in Boston, in New Orleans, and latterly in Washington, have seen, even as I saw two hours ago, tallying, one might say, the streets of our American cities, and fit to have for his background and accessories their streaming populations and ample and rich facades, a man of striking masculine beauty—a poet—powerful and venerable in appearance; large, calm, superbly formed; oftenest clad in the careless, rough, and always picturesque costume of the common people; resembling, and generally taken by strangers for some great mechanic or stevedore, or seaman, or grand laborer of one kind or another; and passing slowly in this guise, with nonchalant and haughty step along the pavement, with the sunlight and shadows falling around him. The dark sombrero he usually wears was, when I saw him just now, the day being warm, held for the moment in his hand; rich light an artist would have chosen, lay upon his uncovered head, majestic, large, Homeric, and set upon his strong shoulders with the grandeur of ancient sculpture. I marked the countenance, serene, proud, cheerful, florid, grave; the brow seamed with noble wrinkles; the features, massive and handsome, with firm blue eyes; the eyebrows and eyelids especially showing that fulness of arch seldom seen save in the antique busts; the flowing hair and fleecy beard, both very gray, and tempering with a look of age the youthful aspect of one who is but forty-five; the simplicity and purity of his dress, cheap and plain, but spotless, from snowy falling collar to burnished boot, and exhaling faint fragrance; the whole form surrounded with manliness as with a nimbus, and breathing, in its perfect health and vigor, the august charm of the strong.

We who have looked upon this figure, or listened to that clear, cheerful, vibrating voice, might thrill to think, could we but transcend our age, that we had been thus near to one of the greatest of the sons of men. But Dante stirs no deep pulse, unless it be of hate, as he walks the streets of Florence; shabby, one-armed soldier, just out of jail and hardly notice, though he has amused Europe, is Michael Cervantes; that son of a vine-dresser, whom Athens laughs at as an eccentric genius, before it is thought worth while to roar him into exile, is the century-shaking Æschylus; that phantom whom the wits of the seventeenth century think not worth extraordinary notice, and the wits of the eighteenth century, spluttering with laughter, call a barbarian, is Shakespeare; that earth-soiled, vice-stained ploughman, with the noble heart and sweet bright eyes, abominated by the good and patronized by the gentry, subject now of anniversary banquets by gentlemen who, could they wander backward from those annual hiccups into time, would never help his life or keep his company—is Robert Burns; and this man, whose gravel perhaps, the next century will cover with passionate and splendid honors, goes regarded with careless curiosity or phlegmatic

composure by his own age. Yet, perhaps, in a few hearts he has waked that deep thrill due to the passage of the sublime. I heard lately, with sad pleasure,<sup>1</sup> of the letter introducing a friend, filled with noble courtesy, and dictated by the reverence for genius, which a distinguished English nobleman, a stranger, sent to this American bard. Nothing deepens my respect for the beautiful intellect of the scholar Alcott, like the bold sentence "Greater than Plato," which he once uttered upon him. I hold it the surest proof of Thoreau's insight, that after a conversation, seeing how he incarnated the immense and new spirit of the age, and was the compend of America, he came away to speak the electric sentence, "He is Democracy!" I treasure to my latest hour, with swelling heart and springing tears, the remembrance that Abraham Lincoln, seeing him for the first time from the window of the east room of the White House as he passed slowly by, and gazing at him long with that deep eye which read men, said, in the quaint, sweet tone, which those who have spoken with him will remember, and with a significant emphasis which the type can hardly convey, "Well, he looks like a MAN!" Sublime tributes, great words; but none too high for their object, the author of *Leaves of Grass*, Walt Whitman, of Brooklyn.

On the 30th of June last, this true American man and author was dismissed, under circumstances of peculiar wrong, from a clerkship he had held for six months in the Department of the Interior. His dismissal was the act of the Hon. James Harlan, the Secretary of the Department, formerly a Methodist clergyman, and president of a Western college.

Upon the interrogation of an eminent officer of the Government, at whose instance the appointment had, under a former Secretary, been made, Mr. Harlan averred that Walt Whitman had been in no way remiss in the discharge of his duties, but that, on the contrary, so far as he could learn, his conduct had been most exemplary. Indeed, during the few months of his tenure of office, he had been promoted. The sole and only cause of his dismissal, Mr. Harlan said, was that he had written the book of poetry entitled *Leaves of Grass*. This book Mr. Harlan characterized as "full of indecent passages." The author, he said, was "a very bad man," a "free lover." Argument being had upon these propositions, Mr. Harlan was, as regards the book, utterly unable to maintain his assertions, and, as regards the author, was forced to own that his opinion of him had been changed. Nevertheless, after this substantial admission of his injustice, he absolutely refused to revoke his action. Of course, under no circumstances would Walt Whitman, the proudest man that lives, have consented to again enter into office under Mr. Harlan; but the demand for his reinstatement was as honorable to the gentleman who made it as the refusal to accede to it was discreditable to the Secretary.

The closing feature of this transaction, and one which was a direct consequence of Mr. Harlan's course, was its remission to the scurrilous, and in some instances libellous, comment of a portion of the press. To sum up, an author, solely and only for the publication, ten years ago, of an honest book, which no intelligent and candid person can regard as hurtful to morality, was expelled from office by the Secretary, and held up to public contumely by the newspapers. It only remains to be added here, that the Hon. James Harlan is the gentleman who, upon assuming the control of the Department, published a manifesto, announcing that it was thenceforth to be governed "upon the principles of Christian civilization."

This act of expulsion, and all that it encloses, is the outrage to which I referred in my opening paragraph.

I have had the honor, which I esteem a very high one, to know Walt Whitman intimately for several years, and am conversant with the details of his life and history. Scores and scores of persons, who know him well, can confirm my own report of him, and I have therefore no hesitation in saying that the scandalous assertions of Mr. Harlan, derived from whom I know not,

as to his being a bad man, a free lover, etc., belong to the category of those calumnies at which, as Napoleon said, innocence itself is confounded. A better man in all respects, or one more irreproachable in his relations to the other sex, lives not upon this earth. His is the great goodness, the great chastity of spiritual strength and sanity. I do not believe that from the hour of his infancy, when Lafayette held him in his arms, to the present hour, in which he bends over the last wounded and dying of the war, anyone can say aught of him, which does not consort with the largest and truest manliness. I am perfectly aware of the miserable lies which have been put into circulation respecting him, of which the story of his dishonoring an invitation to dine with Emerson, by appearing at the table of the Astor House in a red shirt, and with the manners of a rowdy, is a mild specimen. I know too the inferences drawn by wretched fools, who, because they have seen him riding upon the top of an omnibus; or at Pfaff's restaurant; or dressed in rough clothes suitable for his purposes, and only remarkable because the wearer was a man of genius; or mixing freely and lovingly, like Lucretius, like Rabelais, like Francis Bacon, like Rembrandt, like all great students of the world, with low and equivocal and dissolute persons, as well as with those of a different character, must needs set him down as a brute, a scallawag, and a criminal. Mr. Harlan's allegations are of a piece with these. If I could associate the title with a really great person, or if the name of man were not radically superior, I should say that for solid nobleness of character, for native elegance and delicacy of soul, for a courtesy which is the very passion of thoughtful kindness and forbearance, for his tender and paternal respect and manly honor for woman, for love and heroism carried into the pettiest details of life, and for a large and homely beauty of manners, which makes the civilities of parlors fantastic and puerile in comparison, Walt Whitman deserves to be considered the grandest gentleman that treads this continent. I know well the habits and tendencies of his life. They are all simple, sane, domestic, worthy of him as one of an estimable family and member of society. He is a tender and faithful son, a good brother, a loyal friend, an ardent and devoted citizen. He has been a laborer, working successively as a farmer, a carpenter, a printer. He has been a stalwart editor of the Republican party, and often, in that powerful and nervous prose of which he is master, done yeoman's service for the great cause of human liberty and the imperial conception of the indivisible Union. He has been a visitor of prisons, a protector of fugitive slaves, a constant voluntary nurse, night and day, at the hospitals, from the beginning of the war to the present time; a brother and friend through life to the neglected and the forgotten, the poor, the degraded, the criminal, the outcast, turning away from no man for his guilt, nor woman for her vileness. His is the strongest and truest compassion I have ever known. I remember here the anecdote told me by a witness, of his meeting in a by-street in Boston a poor ruffian, one whom he had known well as an innocent child, now a fullgrown youth, vicious far beyond his years, flying to Canada from the pursuit of the police, his sin-trampled features bearing marks of the recent bloody brawl in New York, in which, as he supposed, he had killed some one; and having heard his hurried story, freely confided to him, Walt Whitman, separated not from the bad even by his own goodness, with well I know what tender and tranquil feeling for the ruined being, and with a love which makes me think of that love of God which deserts not any creature, quietly at parting, after assisting him from his means, held him for a moment, with his arm around his neck, and, bending to the face, horrible and battered and prematurely old, kissed him on the cheek, and the poor hunted wretch, perhaps for the first time in his low life, receiving a token of love and compassion like a touch from beyond the sun, hastened away in deep dejection, sobbing and in tears. It reminds me of the anecdotes Victor Hugo, in his portraiture of Bishop Myriel, tells, under a thin veil of fiction, of Charles Miolles, the good Bishop of Digne. I know not what talisman Walt Whitman carries,

unless it be an unexcluding friendliness and goodness which is felt upon his approach like magnetism; but I know that in the subterranean life of cities, among the worst roughs, he goes safely; and I could recite instances where hands that, in mere wantonness of ferocity, assault anybody, raised against him, have of their own accord been lowered almost as quickly, or, in some cases, have been dragged promptly down by others; this, too, I mean, when he and the assaulting gang were mutual strangers. I have seen singular evidence of the mysterious quality which not only guards him, but draws to him with intuition, rapid as light, simple and rude people, as to their natural mate and friend. I remember, as I passed the White House with him one evening, the startled feeling with which I saw a soldier on guard there—a stranger to us both, and with something in his action that curiously proved that he was a stranger—suddenly bring his musket to the "present" in military salute to him, quickly mingling with this respect due to his colonel, a gesture of greeting with the right hand as to a comrade, grinning, meanwhile, good fellow, with shy, spontaneous affection and deference, his ruddy, broad face glowing in the flare of the lampions. I remember, on another occasion, as I crossed the street with him, the driver of a street-car, a stranger, stopping the conveyance, and inviting him to get on and ride with him. Adventures of this kind are frequent, and "I took a fancy to you," or "You look like one of my style," is the common explanation he gets upon their occurrence. It would be impossible to exaggerate the personal adhesion and strong, simple affection given him, in numerous instances on sight, by multitudes of plain persons, sailors, mechanics, drivers, soldiers, farmers, sempstresses, old people of the past generation, mothers of families—those powerful, unlettered persons, among whom, as he says in his book, he has gone freely, and who never in most cases even suspect as an author him whom they love as a man, and who loves them in return.

His intellectual influence upon many young men and women—spirits of the morning sort, not willing to belong to that intellectual colony of Great Britain which our literary classes compose, nor helplessly tied, like them, to the old forms—I note as kindred to that of Socrates upon the youth of ancient Attica, or Raleigh upon the gallant young England of his day. It is a power at once liberating, instructing, and inspiring.—His conversation is a university. Those who have heard him in some roused hour, when the full afflatus of his spirit moved him, will agree with me that the grandeur of talk was accomplished. He is known as a passionate lover and powerful critic of the great music and of art. He is deeply cultured by some of the best books, especially those of the Bible, which he prefers above all other great literature, but principally by contact and communion with things themselves, which literature can only mirror and celebrate. He has travelled through most of the United States, intent on comprehending and absorbing the genius and history of his country, that he might do his best to start a literature worthy of her, sprung from her own polity, and tallying her own unexampled magnificence among the nations. To the same end, he has been a long, patient, and laborious student of life, mixing intimately with all varieties of experience and men, with curiosity and with love. He has given his thought, his life, to this beautiful ambition, and, still young, he has grown gray in its service. He has never married; like Giordano Bruno, he has made Thought in the service of his fellow-creatures his *bella donna*, his best beloved, his bride. His patriotism is boundless. It is no intellectual sentiment; it is a personal passion. He performs with scrupulous fidelity and zeal the duties of a citizen. For eighteen years, not missing once, his ballot has dropped on every national and local election day, and his influence has been ardently given for the good cause. Of all men I know, his life is most in the life of the nation. I remember, when the first draft was ordered, at a time when he was already performing an arduous and perilous duty as a volunteer attendant upon the wounded in the field—a duty which cost him the only illness he ever had in his life, and a very



severe and dangerous illness it was, the result of poison absorbed in his devotion to the worst cases of hospital gangrene, and when it would have been the easiest thing in the world to evade duty, for though then only forty-two or three years old, and subject to the draft, he looked a hale sixty, and no enrolling officer would have paused for an instant before his gray hair—I remember, I say, how anxious and careful he was to get his name put on the enrolment [sic] lists, that he might stand his chance for martial service. This, too, at a time when so many gentlemen were skulking, dodging, agonizing for substitutes, and practising every conceivable device to escape military duty. What music of speech, though Cicero's own—what scarlet and gold superlatives could adorn or dignify this simple, antique trait of private heroism?—I recall his love for little children, for the young, and for very old persons, as if the dawn and the evening twilight of life awakened his deepest tenderness. I recall the affection for him of numbers of young me, and invariably of all good women. Who, knowing him, does not regard him as a man of the highest spiritual culture? I have never known one of greater and deeper religious feeling. To call one like him good seems an impertinence. In our sweet country phrase, he is one of God's men. And as I write these hurried and broken memoranda—as his strength and sweetness of nature, his moral health, his rich humor, his gentleness, his serenity, his charity, his simple-heartedness, his courage, his deep and varied knowledge of life and men, his calm wisdom, his singular and beautiful boy-innocence, his personal majesty, his rough scorn of mean actions, his magnetic and exterminating anger on due occasions—all that I have seen and heard of him, the testimony of associates, the anecdotes of friends, the remembrance of hours with him that should be immortal, the traits, lineaments, incidents of his life and being—as they come crowding into memory—his seems to me a character which only the heroic pen of Plutarch could record, and which Socrates himself might emulate or envy.

This is the man whom Mr. Harlan charges with having written a bad book. I might ask, How long is it since bad books have been the flower of good lives? How long is it since grape-vines produced thorns or fig-trees thistles?

But Mr. Harlan says the book is bad because it is "full of indecent passages." This allegation has been brought against *Leaves of Grass* before. It has been sounded long and strong by many of the literary journals of both continents. As criticism it is legitimate. I may condemn the mind or deplore the moral life in which such a criticism has its source; still, as criticism it has a right to existence. But Mr. Harlan, passing the limits of opinion, inaugurates punishment. He joins the band of the hostile verdict; he incarnates their judgment; then, detaching himself, he proceeds to a solitary and signal vengeance. As far as he can have it so, this author, for having written his book, shall starve. He shall starve, and his name shall receive a brand. This is the essence of Mr. Harlan's action. It is a dark and serious step to take. Upon what grounds is it taken?

I have carefully counted out from Walt Whitman's poetry the lines, perfectly moral to me, whether viewed in themselves or in the light of their sublime intentions and purport, but upon which ignorant and indecent persons of respectability base their sweeping condemnation of the whole work. Taking *Leaves of Grass*, and the recent small volume, "Drum-Taps " (which was in Mr. Harlan's possession), there are in the whole about nine thousand lines or verses. From these, including matter which I can hardly imagine objectionable to any one, but counting everything which the most malignant virtue could shrink from, I have culled eighty lines. Eighty lines out of nine thousand! It is a less proportion than one finds in Shakespeare. Upon this so slender basis rests the whole crazy fabric of American and European slander and the brutal lever of the Secretary.

Now, what by competent authority is the admitted character of the book in which these lines occur? For, though it is more than probable that Mr. Harlan never heard of the work till the hour of his explorations in the Department, the intellectual hemispheres of Great Britain and America have rung with it from side to side. It has received as extensive a critical notice, I suppose, as has ever been given to a volume. Had it been received only with indifference or derision, I should not have been surprised. In an age in which few breathe the atmosphere of the grand literature—which forgets the superb books and thinks Bulwer moral, and Dickens great, and Thackeray a real satirist—which gives to Macaulay the laurel due to Herodotus, and to Tennyson the crown reserved for Homer, and in which the chairs of criticism seem abandoned to squirts, and pedagogues, and monks—a mighty poet has little to expect from the literary press save unconcern and mockery. But even under these hard conditions the tremendous force of this poet has achieved a relative conquest, and the tone of the press denotes his book as not merely great, but illustrious. Even the copious torrents of abuse which have been lavished upon it have, in numerous instances, taken the form of tribute to its august and mysterious power, being in fact identical with that still vomited upon Montaigne and Juvenal. On the other hand, eulogy, very lofty and from the highest sources, has spanned it with sunbows. Emerson, our noblest scholar, a name to which Christendom does reverence, a critic of piercing insight and full comprehension, has pronounced it "the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed." How that austere and rare spirit, Thoreau, regarded it may be partly seen by his last posthumous volume. He thought of it, I have heard, with measureless esteem, ranking it with the vast and gorgeous conceptions of the Oriental bards. It has been reported to me that unpublished letters, received in this country from some of Europe's greatest, announce a similar verdict. The "North American Review," unquestionably the highest organ of American letters, in the course of a eulogistic notice of the work, remarking upon the passages which Mr. Harlan has treated as if they were novel in literature, observes: "There is not anything, perhaps (in the book), which modern usage would stamp as more indelicate than are some passages in Homer. There is not a word in it meant to attract readers by its grossness as there is in half the literature of the last century, which holds its place unchallenged on the tables of our drawing-rooms." The London "Dispatch," in a review written by the Rev. W. J. Fox, one of the most distinguished clergymen in England, after commending the poems for "their strength of expression, their fervor, their hearty wholesomeness, their originality and freshness, their singular harmony," etc., says that, "in the unhesitating frankness of a man who dares to call simplest things by their plain names, conveying also a large sense of the beautiful," there is involved "a clearer conception of what manly modesty really is than in anything we have in all conventional forms of word, deed, or act, so far known of," and concludes by declaring that "the author will soon make his way into the confidence of his readers, and his poems in time will become a pregnant text-book, from which quotations as sterling as the minted gold will be taken and applied to every form of the inner and the outer life." The London "Leader," one of the foremost of the British literary journals, in a review which more nearly approaches perception of the true character and purport of the book than any I have seen, has the following sentences:

"Mr. Emerson recognized the first issue of the *Leaves*, and hastened to welcome the author, then totally unknown. Among other things, said Emerson to the new avatar, 'I greet you at the beginning of a great career which yet must have had a long foreground somewhere for such a start.' The last clause was, however, overlooked entirely by the critics, who treated the new author as one self-educated, yet in the rough, unpolished, and owing nothing to instruction. The

authority for so treating the author was derived from himself, who thus described in one of his poems, his person, character, and name, having omitted the last from the title-page,

“Walt Whitman, an American, one of the roughs, a kosmos,  
Disorderly, fleshy, and sensual,—“

and in various other passages confessed to all the vices, as well as the virtues, of man. All this, with intentional wrong-headedness, was attributed by the sapient reviewers to the individual writer, and not to the subjective-hero supposed to be writing. Notwithstanding the word 'kosmos,' the writer was taken to be an ignorant man. Emerson perceived at once that there had been a long foreground somewhere or somehow;—not so they. Every page teems with knowledge, with information; but they saw it not, because it did not answer their purpose to see it . . . . . The poem in which the word 'kosmos' appears explains in fact the whole mystery—nay, the word itself explains it. The poem is nominally upon himself, but really includes everybody. It begins:

“I celebrate myself,  
And what I assume, you shall assume;  
For every atom belonging to me, as good belongs to you.”

In a word, Walt Whitman *represents the kosmical man—he is the ADAMUS of the Nineteenth century—not an individual, but MANKIND*. As such, in celebrating himself, he proceeds to celebrate universal humanity in its attributes, and accordingly commences his dithyramb with the five senses, beginning with that of smell. Afterwards, he deals with the intellectual, rational, and moral powers, showing throughout his treatment an intimate acquaintance with Kant's transcendental method, and perhaps including in his development the whole of the German school, down to Hegel—at any rate as interpreted by Cousin and others in France and Emerson in the United States. He certainly includes Fichte, for he mentions the egotist as the only true philosopher, and consistently identifies himself not only with every man, but with the universe and its Maker; and it is in doing so that the strength of his description consists. It is from such an ideal elevation that he looks down on Good and Evil, regards them as equal, and extends to them the like measure of equity . . . . Instead, therefore, of regarding these *Leaves of Grass* as a marvel, they seem to us as the most natural product of the American soil. They are certainly filled with an American spirit, breathe the American air, and assert the fullest American freedom." The passages characterized by the Secretary as "indecent" are, adds the "Leader," "only so many instances adduced in support of a philosophical principle, not meant for obscenity, but for scientific examples introduced, as they might be in any legal, medical, or philosophical book, for the purpose of instruction."

I could multiply these excerpts; but here are sufficient specimens of the competent judgments of eminent scholars and divines, testifying to the intellectual and moral grandeur of this work. Let it be remembered that there is nothing in the book that in one form or another is not contained in all great poetic or universal literature. It has nothing either in quantity or quality so offensive as everybody knows is in Shakespeare. All that this poet has done is to mention, without levity, without low language, very seriously, often devoutly, always simply, certain facts in the natural history of man and of life, and sometimes, assuming their sanctity, to use them in illustration or imagery. Far more questionable mention and use of these facts are common to the greatest

literature. Shall the presence in a book of eighty lines, similar in character to what every great and noble poetic book contains, be sufficient to shove it below even the lewd writings of Petronius Arbiter, the dirty dramas of Shirley, or the scrofulous fiction of Louvet de Couvray? To lump it in with the anonymous lascivious trash spawned in holes and sold in corners, too witless and disgusting for any notice but that of the police; and to entitle its author to treatment such as only the nameless wretches of the very sewers of authorship ought to receive?

If, rising to the utmost cruelty of conception, I can dare add to the calamities of genius a misery so degrading and extreme as to imagine the great authors of the world condemned to clerkships under Mr. Harlan, I can at least mitigate that dream of wretchedness and insult by adding the fancy of their fate under the action of his principles. Let me suppose them there, and he still magnifying the calling of the Secretary into that of literary headsman. He opens the great book of Genesis. Everywhere "indecent passages." The mother hushes the child, and bids him skip as he reads aloud that first great history. It cannot be read aloud in "drawing-rooms" by "gentlemen" and "ladies." The freest use of language, the plainest terms, frank mention of forbidden subjects; the story of Onan, of Hagar and Sarai, of Lot and his daughters, of Isaac, Rebekah, and Abimelech, of Jacob and Leah, of Reuben and Bilhah; of Potiphar's wife and Joseph; tabooed allusion and statement everywhere; no veils, no euphemism, no delicacy, no meal in the mouth anywhere. Out with Moses! The cloven splendor on that awful brow shall not save him.

Mr. Harlan takes up the Iliad and the Odyssey. The loves of Jupiter and Juno, the dalliance of Achilles and Patroclus with their women; the perfectly frank, undraped reality of Greek life and manners naively shown without regard to the feelings of Christian civilizees—horrible! Out with Homer!

Here is Lucretius: Mr. Harlan opens the "De Rerum Natura," and reads the vast, benign, majestic lines, sad with the shadow of the intelligible universe upon them; sublime with the tragic problems of the Infinite; august with their noble love and compassion for mankind. But what is this? "Ut quasi transactis soepe omnibus rebus," etc. And this: "More ferarum quadrupedumque magis ritu." And this: "Nam mulier prohibet se consipere atque repugnat," etc. And this: "Quod petiere, premunt arcte, faciuntque dolorem," etc. Enough. Fine language, fine illustrations, fine precepts, pretty decency! Out with Lucretius! Out with the chief poet of the Tiber side!

Here is Æschylus; a dark magnificence of cloud, all rough with burning gold, which thunders and drips blood! The Greek Shakespeare. The gorgeous and terrible Æschylus! What is this in the "Prometheus" about Jove and Io? What sort of detail is that which, at the distance of ten years, I remember amazed Mr. Buckley as he translated the Agamemnon? What kind of talk is this in the "Choephoroi," in "The Suppliants," and in the fragments of the comic drama of "The Argians"? Out with Æschylus!

Here is the sublime book of Ezekiel. All the Hebrew grandeur at its fullest is there. But look at this blurt of coarse words, hurled direct as the prophet-mouth can hurl them—this familiar reference to functions and organs voted out of language—this bread for human lips baked with ordure—these details of the scortatory loves of Aholah and Aholibah. Enough. Dismiss this dreadful majesty of Hebrew poetry. He has no "taste." He is "indecent." Out with Ezekiel!

Here is Dante. Open the tremendous pages of the "Inferno." What is this about the she-wolf Can Grande will kill? What picture is this of strumpet Thais?—ending with the lines:

"Taida e, la puttana che rispose  
At drudo suo, quando disse: Ho io grazie  
Grandi appo te? Anzi meravigliose."

What is this also in the eighteenth canto?

"Quivi venimmo, e quindi gui nel fosso  
Vidi gente attuffata in uno sterco  
Che dagli uman privati pareva mosso:  
E mentre ch' io la giu con l'occhio cerco,  
Vidi un col capo si di merda lordo,  
Che non pareva s'era laico o cherco."

What is this line at the end of the twenty-first canto, which even John Carlyle flinches from translating, but which Dante did not flinch from writing?

"Ed egli avea del cul fatto trombetta."

And look at these lines in the twenty-eighth canto:

"Gia reggia, per mezzul perdere o lulla  
Com' io vidi on, cosi non si pertugia  
Rotto dal mento insin dove si trulla."

That will do. Dante, too, has "indecent passages." Out with Dante!

Here is the book of Job : the vast Arabian landscape, the picturesque pastoral details of Arabian life, the last tragic immensity of Oriental sorrow, the whole overarching sky of Oriental piety, are here. But here also the inevitable "indecentcy." Instead of the virtuous fiction of the tansy bed, Job actually has the indelicacy to state how man is born—even mentions the belly; talks about the gendering of bulls, and the miscarriage of cows; uses rank idioms; and in the thirty-first chapter especially, indulges in a strain of thought and expression which it is amazing does not bring down upon him, even at this late date, the avalanches of our lofty and pure reviews. Here is certainly "an immoral poet." Out with Job!

Here is Plutarch, prince of biographers, and Herodotus, flower of historians. What have we now? Traits of character not to be mentioned, incidents of conduct, accounts of manners, minute details of customs, which our modern historical dandies would never venture upon recording. Out with Plutarch and Herodotus!

Here is Tacitus. What statement of crimes that ought not to be hinted? Does the man gloat over such things? What dreadful kisses are these of Agrippina to Nero—the mother to the son? Out with Tacitus! And since there are books that ought to be publicly burned,<sup>2</sup> by all means let the stern grandeur of that rhetoric be lost in flame.

Here is Shakespeare: "indecent passages" everywhere—every drama, every poem thickly inlaid with them; all that men do displayed, sexual acts treated lightly, jested about, mentioned obscenely; the language never bolted; slang, gross puns, lewd words, in profusion. Out with Shakespeare!

Here is the Canticle of Canticles: beautiful, voluptuous poem of love literally, whatever be its mystic significance; glowing with the color, odorous with the spices, melodious with the voices of the East; sacred and exquisite and pure with the burning chastity of passion, which completes and exceeds the snowy chastity of virgins. This to me, but what to the Secretary? Can he endure that the female form should stand thus in a poem, disrobed, unveiled, bathed in erotic splendor? Look at these voluptuous details, this expression of desire, this amorous tone and glow, this consecration and perfume lavished upon the sensual. No! Out with Solomon!

Here is Isaiah. The grand thunder-roll of that righteousness, like the lion-roar of Jehovah above the guilty world, utters coarse words. Amidst the bolted lightnings of that sublime denunciation, coarse thoughts, indelicate figures, indecent allusions, flash upon the sight, like gross imagery in a midnight landscape. Out with Isaiah!

Here is Montaigne. Open those great, those virtuous pages of the unflinching reporter of man; the soul all truth and daylight, all candor, probity, sincerity, reality, eyesight. A few glances will suffice. Cant and vice and snuffle have groaned over these pages before. Out with Montaigne!

Here is Hafiz, the Anacreon of Persia, but more; a banquet of wine in a garden of roses, the nightingales singing, the laughing revellers high with festal joy; but a heavenly flame burns on every brow; a tone not of this sphere is in all the music, all the laughter, all the songs; a light of the Infinite trembles over every chalice and rests on every flower; and all the garden is divine. Still when Hafiz cries out, "Bring me wine, and bring the famed veiled beauty, the Princess of the brothel," etc., or issues similar orders, Mr. Harlan, whose virtue does not understand or endure such metaphors, must deal sternly with this kosmic man of Persia. Out with Hafiz!

Here is Virgil, ornate and splendid poet of old Rome; a master with a greater pupil, Alighieri—a bard above whose ashes Boccaccio kneels and arises a soldier of mankind. But he must lose those fadeless chaplets, the undying green of a noble fame; for here in the "Æneid" is "Dixerat; et niveis hinc atque hinc Diva lacertis," etc., and here in the "Georgics" is "Quo rapiat sitiens Venerem, interiusque recondat," etc., and there are other verses like these. Out with Virgil!

Here is Swedenborg. Open this poem in prose, the "Conjugal Love," to me, a temple, though in ruins; the sacred fane, clothed in mist, filled with moonlight, of a great though broken mind. What spittle of critic epithets stains all here? "Lewd," "sensual," "lecherous," "coarse," "illicitious," etc. Of course these judgments are final. There is no appeal from the tobacco juice of an expectorating and disdainful virtue. Out with Swedenborg!

Here is Goethe: the horrified squealing of prudes is not yet silent over pages of "Wilhelm Meister: that high and chaste book, the "Elective Affinities," still pumps up oaths from clergymen: Walpurgis has hardly ceased its uproar over Faust. Out with Goethe!

Here is Byron: grand, dark poet; a great spirit—a soul like the ocean; generous lover of America; fiery trumpet of liberty; a sword for the human cause in Greece; a torch for the human mind in "Cain;" a life that redeemed its every fault by taking a side, which was the human side; tempest of scorn in his first poem, tempest of scorn and laughter in his last poem, only against the things that wrong man; vast bud of the Infinite that Death alone prevented from its vaster flower; immense, seminal, electrical, dazzling Byron. But Beppo—O! But Don Juan—O, fie! Not to mention the Countess Guiccioli—ah, me! Prepare quickly the yellow envelope, and out with Byron!

Here is Cervantes: open "Don Quixote," paragon of romances, highest result of Spain, best and sufficient reason for her life among the nations, a laughing novel which is a weeping poem. But talk such as this of Sancho Panza and Tummas Cecial under the cork trees, and these coarse stories and bawdy words, and this free and gross comedy—is it to be endured? Out with Cervantes!

Here is another, a sun of literature, moving in a vast orbit with dazzling plenitudes of power and beauty; the one only modern European poet and novelist worthy to rank with the first; permanent among the fleeting; a demigod of letters among the pigmies; a soul of the antique strength and sadness, worthy to stand as the representative of the high thought and hopes of the Nineteenth century—Victor Hugo. Now open "Les Miserables." See the great passages which the American translator softens and the English translator tears away. Open this other book of his, "William

Shakespeare," a book with only one grave fault, the omission of the words "a Poem" from the titlepage; a book which is the courageous arch, the comprehending sky of criticism, but which no American publisher will dare to issue, or if he does will expurgate. Out with Hugo, of course!

Here is Juvenal, terrible and splendid fountain of all satire; inspiration of all just censure; exemplar of all noble rage at baseness; satirist and moralist sublimed into the poet; the scowl of the unclouded noon above the low streets of folly and of sin. But what he withers, he also shows. The sun-stroke of his poetry reveals what it kills. Juvenal tells all. His fidelity of exposure is frightful. Mr. Harlan would make short work of him. Out with Juvenal!

Open the divine "Apocalypse." What words are these among the thunderings and lightnings and voices? Is this a poem to be read aloud in parlors? (for such appears to be the test of propriety and purity). At least, John might have been a little more choice in language. Some of these texts are "indecent." Yes, indeed! John must go!

Here is Spenser. Encyclopaedic poet of the ideal chivalry. It is all there. Amadis, Esplandian, Tirante the White, Palmerin of England, all those Paladin romances were but the leaves; this is the flower. A lost dream of valor, chastity, courtesy, glory—a dream that marks an age of human history—glimmers here, far in these depths, and makes this unexplored obscurity divine. 1 "But is the 'Faery Queen' such a book as you would wish to put into the hands of a lady?" What a question! Has it not been expurgated? Out with Spenser!

Here is another, a true soldier of the human emancipation; one who smites amid uproars of laughter; the master of Titanic farce; a whirlwind and earthquake of derision—Rabelais. A nice one for Mr. Harlan! One glimpse at the chapter which explains why the miles lengthen as you leave Paris, or at the details of the birth and nurture of Gargantua, will suffice. Out with Rabelais—out with the great jester of France, as Lord Bacon calls him!

And here is Lord Bacon himself, in one of whose pages you may read,<sup>3</sup> done from the Latin by Spedding into a magnificent golden thunder of English, the absolute defence of the free spirit of the great authors, coupled with stern rebuke to the spirit that would pick and choose, as dastard and effeminate. Out with Lord Bacon!

Not him only, not these only, not only the writers are under the ban. Here is Phidias, gorgeous sculptor in gold and ivory, giant dreamer of the Infinite in marble; but he will not use the fig-leaf. Here is Rembrandt, who paints the Holland landscape, the Jew, the beggar, the burgher, in lights and glooms of Eternity; and his pictures have been called "indecent." Here is Mozart, his music rich with the sumptuous color of all sunsets; and it has been called sensual." Here is Michelangelo, who makes art tremble with a new and strange afflatus, and gives Europe novel and sublime forms that tower above the centuries, and accost the Greek; and his works have been called "bestial"! Out with them all!

Now, except Virgil, for vassalage to literary models, and for grave and sad falsehood to liberty; except Goethe for his lack of the final ecstasy of self-surrender which completes a poet, and for coldness to the great mother, one's country; except Spenser for his remoteness, and Byron for his immaturity, and there is not one of those I have named that does not belong to the first order of human intellect. But no need to make discriminations here; they are all great; they have all striven; they have all served. Moses, Homer, Lucretius, Æschylus, Ezekiel, Dante, Job, Plutarch, Herodotus, Tacitus, Shakespeare, Solomon, Isaiah, Montaigne, Hafiz, Virgil, Swedenborg, Goethe, Byron, Connotes, Hugo, Juvenal, John, Spenser, Rabelais, Bacon, Phidias, Rembrandt, Mozart, Michelangelo—these are among the demi-gods of human thought; the souls that have loved and suffered for the race; the light-bringers, the teachers, the lawgivers, the consolers, the liberators, the inspired inspirers of mankind; the noble and gracious beings who, in the service of

humanity, have borne every cross and earned every crown. There is not one of them that is not sacred in the eyes of thoughtful men. But not one of them do the rotten taste and morals of the Nineteenth century spare. Not one of them is qualified to render work for bread under this Secretary! Do I err? Do I exaggerate? I write without access to the books I mention (it is fitting that this piece of insolent barbarism should have been committed in almost the only important American city which is without a public library!)—and with the exception of three or four volumes which I happen to have by me, I am obliged to rely for my statements on the memory of youthful readings, eight or ten years ago. But name me one book of the first order in which such passages as I refer to do not occur! Tell me who can—what poet of the first grade escapes this brand "immoral," or this spittle "indecent"?

If the great books are not, in the point under consideration, in the same moral category as *Leaves of Grass*, then why, either in translation or in the originals, either by a bold softening which dissolves the author's meaning, or by absolute excision, are they nearly all expurgated? Answer me that. By one process or the other, Brizeux, Cary, Wright, Cayley, Carlyle, everybody, expurgates Dante; Langhorne and others expurgate Plutarch; Potter and others expurgate Æschylus; Gifford, Anthon and others expurgate Juvenal; Creech, Watson and others expurgate Lucretius; Bowdler and others expurgate Shakespeare; Nott (I believe it is) expurgates Hafiz; Wraxall and Wilbour expurgate Hugo; Kirkland, Hart and others expurgate Spenser; somebody expurgates Virgil; somebody expurgates Byron; the Oxford scholars dilute Tacitus; Lord Derby expurgates Homer, besides making him as ridiculous as the plucked cock of Diogenes in translation; several bands expurgate Goethe; and Archbishop Tillotson in design expurgates Moses, Ezekiel, Solomon, Isaiah, St. John, and all the others a job which Dr. Noah Webster executes, but, thank God, cannot popularize. What book is spared? Nothing but a chain of circumstances, which one might fancy divinely ordained, saves us the relatively un mutilated Bible. Nearly every other great book bleeds. When one is not expurgated, the balance is restored by its being cordially abused. Thanks to the splendid conscience and courage of Mr. Wight, we can read Montaigne in English without the omission of a single word. Thanks also to Smollett, Motteux and others, Cervantes has gone untouched, and we have not as yet a family Rabelais. Neither have we as yet a family Mankind nor a family Universe; but this is an oversight which will, doubtless, be repaired in time. God's works will also, doubtless, be expurgated whenever it is possible. Why not? One step to this end is taken in the expurgation of Genius, which is His second manifestation, as Nature is His first! Go on, gentlemen! You will yet have things as "moral " as you desire!

I am aware that as far as his opinion, not his act, is concerned, Mr. Harlan, however unintelligently, represents to some extent the shallow conclusions of his age, and I know it will be said that if the great books contain these passages, they ought to be expurgated. It is not my design to endeavor to put a quart into people who only hold a gill, nor would I waste time in endeavoring to convert a large class of persons whom I once heard Walt Whitman describe, with his usual Titanic richness and strength of phrase, as "the immutable granitic pudding-heads of the world." But there is a better class than these; and I am filled with measureless amazement, that persons of high intelligence, living to the age of maturity, do not perceive, at least, the immense and priceless scientific and human uses of such passages, and the consequent necessity, transcending and quashing all minor considerations, of having them where they are. But look at these sad sentences—a complete and felicitous statement of the whole modern doctrine—in the pages of a man I love and revere: "The literature of three centuries ago is not decent to be read; we expurgate it. Within a hundred years, woman has become a reader, and for that reason, as



much as, or more than, anything else, literature has sprung to a higher level. No need now to expurgate all you read." He goes on to argue that literature in the next century will be richer than in the classic epochs, because woman will contribute to it as an author—her contribution, I infer, to be of the kind that will not need expurgating. These, I repeat, are sad sentences. If they are true, Bowdler is right to expurgate Shakespeare, and Noah Webster the Bible. But no, they are not true! I welcome woman into art; but when she comes there grandly, she will not come either as expurgator or creator of emasculate or partial forms. Woman, grand in art, is Rosa Bonheur, painting with fearless pencil the surly, sublime Jovian bull, equipped for masculine use; painting the powerful, ramping stallion in his amorous pride; not weakly nor meanly flinching from the full celebration of what God has made. Woman, grand in art, will come creating in forms, however novel, the absolute, the permanent, the real, the evil and the good, as Æschylus, as Cervantes, as Shakespeare before her; with sex, with truth, with universality, without omissions or concealments. And woman, as the ideal reader of literature, is not the indelicate prude, flushing and squealing over some frank page; it is that high and beautiful soul, Marie de Gournay, devoutly absorbing the work of her master Montaigne, finding it all great, greatly comprehending, greatly accepting it all; fronting its license and grossness without any of the livid shuddering of Puritans, and looking on the book in the same universal and kindly spirit as its author looked upon the world. Woman reading otherwise than thus—shrinking from Apuleius, from Rabelais, from Aristophanes, from Shakespeare, from even Wycherley, or Petronius, or Aretin, or Shirley—is less than man, is not ideal, not strong, not nobly good, but petty, and effeminate, mean. And not for her, nor by her, nor by man, do I assent to the expurgation of the great books. Literature cannot spring to a higher level than theirs. Alas! it has sprung to a lower.

The level of the great books is the Infinite, the Absolute. To contain all, by containing the premise, the truth, the idea and feeling of all, to tally the universe by profusion, variety, reality, mystery, enclosure, power, terror, beauty, service; to be great to the utmost conceivability of greatness—what higher level than this can literature spring to? Up on the highest summit stand such works, never to be surpassed, never to be supplanted. Their indecency is not that of the vulgar; their vulgarity is not that of the low. Their evil, if it be evil, is not there for nothing—it serves; at the base of it is Love. Every poet of the highest quality is, in the masterly coinage of the author of *Leaves of Grass*, a kosmos. His work, like himself, is a second world, full of contrarities, strangely harmonized, and moral indeed, but only as the world is moral. Shakespeare is all good, Rabelais is all good, Montaigne is all good, not because all the thoughts, the words, the manifestations are so, but because at the core, and permeating all, is an ethic intention—a love which, through mysterious, indirect, subtle, seemingly absurd, often terrible and repulsive, means, seeks to uplift, and never to degrade. It is the spirit in which authorship is pursued, as Augustus Schlegel has said, that makes it either an infamy or a virtue; and the spirit of the great authors, no matter what their letter, is one with that which pervades the Creation. In mighty love, with implements of pain and pleasure, of good and evil, Nature develops man; genius also, in mighty love, with implements of pain and pleasure, of good and evil, develops man; no matter what the means, that is the end.

Tell me not, then, of the indecent passages of the great poets! The world, which is the poem of God, is full of indecent passages! "Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?" shouts Amos. "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things," thunders Isaiah. "This," says Coleridge, "is the deep abyss of the mystery of God." Ay, and the profound of the mystery of genius also! Evil is part of the economy of genius,

as it is part of the economy of Deity. Gentle reviewers endeavor to find excuses for the freedoms of geniuses. "It is to prove that they were above conventionalities." "It is referable to the age." "The age permitted a degree of coarseness," etc. "Shakespeare's indecencies are the result of his age." Oh, Ossa on Pelion, mount piled on mount, of error and folly! What has genius, spirit of the absolute and the eternal, to do with the definitions of position, or conventionalities, or the age? Genius puts indecencies into its works, because God puts them into His world. Whatever the special reason in each case, this is the general reason in all cases. They are here, because they are there. That is the eternal why.—No; Alphonso of Castile thought that, if he had been consulted at the Creation, he could have given a few hints to the Almighty. Not I. I play Alphonso neither to genius nor to God.

What is this poem, for the giving of which to America and the world, and for that alone, its author has been dismissed with ignominy from a Government office? It is a poem which Schiller might have hailed as the noblest specimen of naive literature, worthy of a place beside Homer. It is, in the first place, a work purely and entirely American, autochthonic, sprung from our own soil; no savor of Europe nor of the past, nor of any other literature in it; a vast carol of our own land, and of its Present and Future; the strong and haughty psalm of the Republic. There is not one other book, I care not whose, of which this can be said. I weigh my words and have considered well. Every other book by an American author implies, both in form and substance, I cannot even say the European, but the British mind. The shadow of Temple Bar and Arthur's Seat lies dark on all our letters. Intellectually, we are still a dependency of Great Britain, and one word—colonial—comprehends and stamps our literature. In no literary form, except our newspapers, has there been anything distinctively American. I note our best books—the works of Jefferson, the romances of Brockden Brown, the speeches of Webster, Everett's rhetoric, the divinity of Channing, some of Cooper's novels, the writings of Theodore Parker, the poetry of Bryant, the masterly law arguments of Lysander Spooner, the miscellanies of Margaret Fuller, the histories of Hildreth, Bancroft and Motley, Ticknor's "History of Spanish Literature," Judd's "Margaret," the political treatises of Calhoun, the rich, benignant poems of Longfellow, the ballads of Whittier, the delicate songs of Philip Pendleton Cooke, the weird poetry of Edgar Poe, the wizard tales of Hawthorne, Irving's "Knickerbocker," Delia Bacon's splendid sibyllic book on Shakespeare, the political economy of Carey, the prison letters and immortal speech of John Brown, the lofty patrician eloquence of Wendell Phillips, and those diamonds of the first water, the great clear essays and greater poems of Emerson. This literature has often commanding merits, and much of it is very precious to me; but in respect to its national character, all that can be said is that it is tinged, more or less deeply, with America; and the foreign model, the foreign standards, the foreign ideas, dominate over it all.

At most, our best books were but struggling beams; behold in *Leaves of Grass* the immense and absolute sunrise! It is all our own! The nation is in it! In form a series of chants, in substance it is an epic of America. It is distinctively and utterly American. Without model, without imitation, without reminiscence, it is evolved entirely from our own polity and popular life. Look at what it celebrates and contains! Hardly to be enumerated without using the powerful, wondrous phrases of its author, so indissoluble are they with the things described. The essences, the events, the objects of America; the myriad varied landscapes; the teeming and giant cities; the generous and turbulent populations; the prairie solitudes, the vast pastoral plateaus; the Mississippi; the land dense with villages and farms; the habits, manners, customs; the enormous diversity of temperatures; the immense geography; the red aborigines passing away, "charging the water and the land with names;" the early settlements; the sudden uprising and defiance of the Revolution;

the august figure of Washington; the formation and sacredness of the Constitution; the pouring in of the emigrants; the million-masted harbors; the general opulence and comfort; the fisheries, and whaling, and gold-digging, and manufactures, and agriculture; the dazzling movement of new States, rushing to be great; Nevada rising, Dakota rising, Colorado rising; the tumultuous civilization around and beyond the Rocky Mountains, thundering and spreading; the Union impregnable; feudalism in all its forms forever tracked and assaulted; liberty deathless on these shores; the noble and free character of the people; the equality of male and female; the ardor, the fierceness, the friendship, the dignity, the enterprise, the affection, the courage, the love of music, the passion for personal freedom; the mercy and justice and compassion of the people; the popular faults and vices and crimes; the deference of the President to the private citizen; the image of Christ forever deepening in the public mind as the brother of despised and rejected persons; the promise and wild song of the future; the vision of the Federal Mother, seated with more than antique majesty in the midst of her many children; the pouring glories of the hereafter; the vistas of splendor, incessant and branching; the tremendous elements, breeds, adjustments of America—with all these, with more, with everything transcendent, amazing, and new, undimmed by the pale cast of thought, and with the very color and brawn of actual life, the whole gigantic epic of our continental being unwinds in all its magnificent reality in these pages. To understand Greece, study the "Iliad" and "Odyssey;" study *Leaves of Grass* to understand America. Her democracy is there. Would you have a text-book of democracy? The writings of Jefferson are good; De Tocqueville is better; but the great poet always contains historian and philosopher—and to know the comprehending spirit of this country, you shall question these insulted pages.

Yet this vast and patriotic celebration and presentation of all that is our own, is but a part of this tremendous volume. Here in addition is thrown in poetic form, a philosophy of life, rich, subtle, composite, ample, adequate to these great shores. Here are presented superb types of models of manly and womanly character for the future of this country, athletic, large, naive, free, dauntless, haughty, loving, nobly carnal, nobly spiritual, equal in body and soul, acceptive and tolerant as Nature, generous, cosmopolitan, above all, religious. Here are erected standards, drawn from the circumstances of our case, by which not merely our literature, but all our performance, our politics, art, behavior, love, conversation, dress, society, everything belonging to our lives and their conduct, will be shaped and recreated. A powerful afflatus from the Infinite has given this book life. A voice which is the manliest of human voices sounds through it all. In it is the strong spirit which will surely mould our future. Mark my words: its sentences will yet clinch the arguments of statesmen; its precepts will be the laws of the people! From the beams of this seminal sun will be generated, with tropical luxuriance, the myriad new forms of thought and life in America. And in view of the national character and national purpose of this work—in view of its vigorous re-enforcement and service to all that we hold most precious—I make the claim here, that so far from defaming and persecuting its author, the attitude of an American statesman or public officer towards him should be to the highest degree friendly and sustaining.

Beyond his country, too, this poet serves the world. He refutes by his example the saying of Goethe, one of those which stain that noble fame with baseness, that a great poet cannot be patriotic; and he dilates to a universal use which redoubles the splendors of his volume, and makes it dear to all that is human. I am not its authorized interpreter, and can only state, at the risk of imperfect expression and perhaps error, what its meanings and purpose seem to me. But I see that, in his general intention, the author has aimed to express that most common but wondrous thing—that strange assemblage of soul, body, intellect—beautiful, mystical, terrible,

limited, boundless, ill-assorted, contradictory, yet singularly harmonized—a Human Being, a single, separate identity—a Man—himself; but himself typically, and in his universal being. This he has done with perfect candor, including the bodily attributes and organs as necessary component parts of the creation. Every thinking person should see the value and use of such a presentation of human nature as this. I also see—and it is from these parts of the book that much of the misunderstanding and offence arises—that this poet seeks in subtle ways to rescue from the keeping of blackguards and debauchees, to which it has been abandoned, and to redeem to noble thought and use, the great element of amativeness or sexuality, with all its acts and organs. Sometimes by direct assertion, sometimes by implication, he rejects the prevailing admission that this element is vile; declares its natural or normal manifestation to be sacred and unworthy shame; awards it an equal but not superior sanctity with the other elements that compose man; and illustrates his doctrine and sets his example by applying this element, with all that pertains to it, to use as part of the imagery of poetry. Then, besides, diffused like an atmosphere throughout the poem, tincturing all its quality, and giving it that sacerdotal and prophetic character which makes it a sort of American Bible, is the pronounced and ever-recurring assertion of the divinity of all things. In a spirit like that of the Egyptian priesthood, who wore the dung-beetle in gold on their crests, perhaps as a symbol of the sacredness of even the lowest forms of life, the poet celebrates all the Creation as noble and holy—the meanest and lowest parts of it, as well as the most lofty; all equally projections of the Infinite; all emanations of the creative life of God. Perpetual hymns break from him in praise of the divineness of the universe; he sees a halo around every shape, however low; and life in all its forms inspires a rapture of worship.

How some persons can think a book of this sort bad, is clearer to me than it used to be. Swedenborg says that to the devils, perfumes are stinks. I happen to know that some of the vilest abuse *Leaves of Grass* has received, has come from men of the lowest possible moral life. It is not so easy to understand how some persons of culture and judgment can fail to perceive its literary greatness. Making fair allowance for faults, which no great work, from "Hamlet" to the world itself, is perhaps without, the book, in form as in substance, seems to me a masterpiece. Never in literature has there been more absolute conceptive or presentative power. The forms and shows of things are bodied forth so that one may say they become visible, and are alive. Here, in its grandest, freest use, is the English language, from its lowest compass to the top of the key; from the powerful, rank idiom of the streets and fields to the last subtlety of academic speech—ample, various, telling, luxuriant, pictorial, final, conquering; absorbing from other languages to its own purposes their choicest terms; its rich and daring composite defying grammar; its most incontestable and splendid triumphs achieved, as Jefferson notes of the superb Latin of Tacitus, in haughty scorn of the rules of grammarians. Another singular excellence is the metre—entirely novel, free, flexible, melodious, corresponsive to the thought; its noble proportions and cadences reminding of winds and waves, and the vast elemental sounds and motions of Nature, and having an equal variety and liberty. I have heard this brought into disparaging comparison with the metres of Tennyson; the poetry also disparaged in the same connection. I hardly know what to think of people who can talk in this way. To say nothing of the preference, the mere parallel is only less ludicrous and arbitrary than would be one between Moore and Isaiah. Tennyson is an exquisite and sumptuous poet of the third, perhaps the fourth order, as certainly below Milton and Virgil as Milton and Virgil are certainly below AEschylus and Homer. His full-fluted verbal music, which is one of his chief merits, is of an extraordinary beauty. But in this respect the comparison between him and Walt Whitman is that between melody and harmony—between a song by Franz Abt or Schubert and a symphony by Beethoven.

Speaking generally, and not with exact justice to either, the words of Tennyson, irrespective of their sense, make music to the ear, while the sense of Walt Whitman's words makes a loftier music in the mind. For a music, perfect and vast, subtle and more than auricular—woven not alone from the verbal sounds and rhythmic cadences, but educed by the thought and feeling of the verse from the reader's soul by the power of a spell few hold—I know of nothing superior to "By the Bivouac's Fitful Flame," the "Ashes of Soldiers," the "Spirit Whose Work is Done," the prelude to "Drum Taps," that most mournful and noble of all love songs, "Out of the Rolling Ocean, the Crowd," or "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," "Elemental Drifts," the entire section entitled "Song of Myself," the hymn commencing "Splendor of Falling Day," or the great salute to the French Revolution of '93, entitled "France." If these are not examples of great structural harmony as well as of the highest poetry, there are none in literature. And if all these were wanting, there is a poem in the volume which, if the author had never written another line, would be sufficient to place him among the chief poets of the world. I do not refer to "Chanting the Square Deific," though that also would be sufficient, in its incomparable breadth and grandeur of conception and execution, to establish the highest poetic reputation, but to the strain commemorating the death of the beloved President, commencing "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed," a poem whose rich and sacred beauty and rapture of tender religious passion, spreading aloft into the sublime, leave it unique and solitary in literature, and will make it the chosen and immortal hymn of Death forever. Emperors might well elect to die, could their memories be surrounded with such a requiem, which, next to the grief and love of the people, is the grandest and the only grand funeral music poured around Lincoln's bier.

In the face of works like these, testimony of the presence on earth of a mighty soul, I am thunderstruck at the low tone of the current criticism. Even from eminent persons, who ought to know how to measure literature, and who are friendly to this author, I hear, mingled with inadequate praises, the self-same censures—the very epithets even which Voltaire not more ridiculously passed on Shakespeare. Take care, gentlemen! What you, like Voltaire, take for rudeness, chaos, barbarism, lack of form, may be the sacred and magnificent wildness of a virgin world of poetry, all unlike these fine and ordered Tennysonian rose-gardens which are your ideal, but excelling these as the globe excels the parterre. I, at any rate, am not deceived. I see how swiftly the smart, bright conventional standards of modern criticism assign Isaiah or Ezekiel to the limbo of abortions. I see of how limited are the wit and scholarship of these "Saturday Reviews" and "London Examiners," with their *doppelgangers* on this side of the Atlantic, by the treatment some poetic masterpiece of China or Hindustan receives when it falls into their hands for judgment. Anything not cast in modern conventional forms, any novel or amazing beauty, strikes them as comic. Read Mr. Buckley's notes, even at this late day, on a poet so incredibly great as Æschylus. Read an Æschylus illustrated by reference to Nicholas Nickleby, Mrs. Bombazine, and Mantalini, and censured in contemptuous, jocular or flippant annotations—this, too, by an Oxford scholar of rank and merit. No wonder *Leaves of Grass* goes underrated or unperceived. Modern criticism is Voltaire estimating the Apocalypse as "dirt," and roaring with laughter over the leaves of Ezekiel. Why? Because this poetry has not the court tread, the perfume, the royal purple of Racine—only its own wild and formless incomparable sublimity. Voltaire was an immense and noble person; only it was not part of his greatness to be able to see that other greatness which transcends common sense as the Infinite transcends the Finite. These children of Voltaire, also, who make the choirs of modern criticism, have great merits. But to justly estimate poetry of the first order is not one of them. "Shakespeare's 'Tempest' or 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' or any such damned nonsense as that," said one of this school to me

a month ago. "Look at that perpendicular grocery sign-board, the letters all fantastic and reading from top to bottom, a mere oddity: that is *Leaves of Grass*," said another, a person of eminence. No, gentlemen! you and I differ. I see, very clearly, the nature of a work like this, the warmest praise of which, not to mention your blame, has been meagre and insufficient to the last degree, and which centuries must ponder before they can sufficiently honor. You have had your say; let me have at least the beginning of mine: Nothing that America had before in literature rose above construction; this is a creation. Idle, and worse than idle, is any attempt to place this author either among or below the poets of the day. They are but singers; he is a bard. In him you have one of that mighty brotherhood who, more than statesmen, mould the future; who, as Fletcher of Saltoun said, when they make the songs of a nation, it matters not who makes the laws. I class him boldly, and the future will confirm my judgment, among the great creative minds of the world. By a quality almost incommunicable, which makes its possessor, no matter what his diversity or imperfections, equal with the Supremes of art, and by the very structure of his mind, he belongs there. His place is beside Shakespeare, Æschylus, Cervantes, Dante, Homer, Isaiah—the bards of the last ascent, the brothers of the radiant summit. And if any man think this estimate extravagant, I leave him, as Lord Bacon says, to the gravity of that judgment, and pass on. Enough for me to pronounce this book grandly good and supremely great. Clamor, on the score of its morality, is nothing but a form of turpitude; denial of its greatness is nothing but an insanity; and the roar of Sodom and the laughter of Bedlam shall not, by a hair's breadth, swerve my verdict.

As for those passages which have been so strangely interpreted, I have to say that nothing but the horrible inanity of prudery, to which civilization has become subject, and which affects even many good persons, could cloud and distort their palpable innocence and nobleness. What chance has an author to a reasonable interpretation of such utterances in an age when squeamishness, the Siamese twin-brother of indelicacy, is throned as the censor of all life? Look at the nearest, the commonest, and homeliest evidences of the abyss into which we have fallen. Here in my knowledge is an estimable family which, when the baby playing on the floor kicked up its skirts, I have repeatedly seen rush en masse to pull down the immodest petticoat. Here is a lady whose shame of her body is such that she will not disrobe in the presence of one of her own sex, and thinks it horrible to sleep at night without being swaddled in half her garments. Everywhere you see women perpetually glancing to be sure their skirts are quite down; twisting their heads over their shoulders, like some of the damned in Dante, to get a rear view; drawing in their feet if so much as a toe happens to protrude beyond the hem of the gown, and in various ways betraying a morbid consciousness which is more offensive than positive immodesty. When I went to the hospital, I saw one of those pretty and good girls, who in muslin and ribbons ornament the wards, and are called "nurses," pick up her skirts and skurry away, flushing hectic, with averted face, because as she passed a cot the poor fellow who lay there happened, in his uneasy turnings, to thrust part of a manly leg from beneath the coverlet. I once heard Emerson severely censured in a private company, five or six persons present, and I the only dissenting voice, because in one of his essays he had used the word "spermatic." When Tennyson published the "Idyls of the King," some of the journals in both America and England, and several persons in my own hearing, censured the weird and magnificent "Vivien," one of his finest poems, as "immoral " and "vulgar." When Charles Sumner, in the debate on Louisiana, characterized the new-formed State as "a seven months' child, begotten by the bayonet, in criminal conjunction with the spirit of caste"—a stroke of absolute genius—he was censured by the public prints, and reminded that there were ladies in the gallery! Lately the "London Observer," one of the most

eminent of the British journals, in a long and labored editorial on the bathing at Margate, denounced the British wives and matrons in the severest terms for sitting on the beach When men were bathing in "slight bathing-dresses " (it was not even pretended that the men were nude)—and even went the length of demanding of the civil authorities that they should invoke the interference of Parliament to stop this scandal! These are fair minor specimens of the prudery, worse than vice, but also the concomitant of the most shocking vice, which prevails everywhere. Its travesty is the dressing in pantalettes the "limbs" of the piano; its insolent tragic-comedy is the expulsion of Shakespeare from office because he writes "indecent passages "; its tragedy is the myriad results of wrong, and crime, and ruin, carried into all the details of every relation of life.

A civilization in which such things as I have mentioned can be thought or done is guilty to the core. It is not purity, it is impurity, which calls clothes more decent than the naked body—thus inane conferring upon the work of the tailor or milliner a modesty denied to the work of God. It is not innocent but guilty thought which attaches shame, secrecy, baseness, and horror to great and august parts and functions of humanity. The tacit admission everywhere prevalent that portions of the human physiology are base; that the amative feelings and acts of the sexes, even when hallowed by marriage, are connected with a low sensuality; and that these, with such subjects or occurrences as the conception and birth of children, are to be absconded from, blushed at, concealed, ignored, withheld from education, and in every way treated as if they belonged to the category of sins against Nature, is not only in itself a contemptible insanity, but a main source of unspeakable personal and social evil. From the morbid state of mind which such a theory and practice must induce are spawned a thousand guilty actions of every description and degree. There is no occurrence in the vast and diversified range of sexual evil, from the first lewd thought in the mind of the budding child, the very suspicion of which makes the parent tremble, down to the last ghastly and bloody spasm of lust which rends its hapless victim in some suburban woodland, that is not fed mainly from this mystery and mother of abominations, to whose care civilization has remitted the entire subject. The poet who, in the spirit of that divine utility which marked the first great bards and will mark the last, seeks to make literature remediate to an estate like this, works in the best interests of his country and his fellow-beings, and deserves their gratitude. This is what Walt Whitman has done. Directly and indirectly, in forms as various as the minds he seeks to influence; in frank opposition to the great sexual falsehood by which we are ruled and ruined, he has thrown into civilization a conception intended to be slowly and insensibly absorbed, and to ultimately appear in results of good—the conception of the individual as a divine democracy of essences, powers, attributes, functions, organs—all equal, all sacred, all consecrate to noble use; the sexual part the same as the rest, no more a subject for mystery, or shame, or secrecy, than the intellectual, or the manual, or the alimentary, or the locomotive part—divinely commonplace as head, or hand, or stomach, or foot; and, though sacred, to be regarded as so ordinary that it shall be employed the same as any other part, for the purposes of literature—an idea which he exemplifies in his poetry by a metaphorical use which it is a deep disgrace to any intellect to misunderstand. This is his lesson, This is one of the central ideas which rule the myriad teeming play of his volume, and interpret it as a law of Nature interprets the complex play of facts which proceeds from it. This, then, is not license, but thought. It may be erroneous, it may be chimerical, it may be ineffectual; but it is thought, serious and solemn thought, on a most difficult and deeply immersed question—thought emanating from the deep source of a great love and care for men, and seeking nothing but a pure human welfare. When, therefore, any persons undertake to outrage and injure its author for

having given it to the world, it is not merely as the pigmy incarnations of the depraved modesty, the surface morality, the filthy and libidinous decency of the age, but it is as the persecutors of thought that they stand before us. It is no excuse for them to say, that such treatment of Walt Whitman is justifiable, because his book appears to them bad. Waiving every other consideration, I have to inform them that on this subject they should not permit themselves the immodesty of a judgment. It is not for such as they to attempt to prison in the poor cell of their opinion the vast journey and illumination of the human mind. No matter what the book seems to them, they should remember that an author deserves to be tried by his peers, and that a book may easily seem to some persons quite another thing from what it really is to others.

Here is Rabelais, a writer who wears all the crowns; but even Mr. Harlan would consider Walt Whitman white as purity beside him. "Filth," "zanyism," "grossness," "profligacy," "licentiousness," "sensuality," "beastliness"—these are samples of the epithets which have fallen, like a rain of excrement, on Rabelais for three hundred years. And yet it is of him that the holy-hearted Coleridge—an authority of the first order on all purely literary or ethical questions—it is of him that Coleridge says, and says justly: "I could write a treatise in praise of the *moral elevation* of Rabelais' work which would make the Church stare, and the Conventicle groan, and yet would be the truth, and nothing but the truth." The moral elevation of Rabelais! A great criticism, a needed word. It is just. No matter for seeming—Rabelais is good to the very core. Rabelais' book, viewed with reference to ensemble, viewed in relation, viewed in its own proper quality by other than cockney standards, is righteous to the uttermost extreme. So is the work of Walt Whitman, far other in character, and far less obnoxious to criticism than that of Rabelais, but which demands at least as liberal a judgment, and which it is not for any deputy, however high in office, to assign to shame.

I know not what further vicissitude of insult and outrage is in store for this great man. It may be that the devotees of a castrated literature, the earthworms that call themselves authors, the confectioners that pass for poets, the flies that are recognized as critics, the bigots, the dilettanti, the prudes and the fools, are more potent than I dream to mar the fortunes of his earthly hours; but above and beyond them uprises a more majestic civilization in the immense and sane serenities of futurity; and the man who has achieved that sublime thing, a genuine book; who has written to make his land greater, her citizens better, his race nobler; who has striven to serve men by communicating to them that which they least know, their own nature, their own experience; who has thrown into living verse a philosophy designed to exalt life to a higher level of sincerity, reality, religion; who has torn away disguises and illusions, and restored to commonest things, and the simplest and roughest people, their divine significance and natural, antique dignity, and who has wrapped his country and all created things as with splendors of sunrise, in the beams of a powerful and gorgeous poetry—that man, whatever be the clouds that close around his fame, is assured illustrious; and when every face lowers, when every hand is raised against him, turning his back upon his day and generation, he may write upon his book, with all the pride and grief of the calumniated Æschylus, the haughty dedication that poet graved upon his hundred dramas: TO TIME!

And Time will remember him. He holds upon the future this supreme claim of all high poets—behind the book, a life loyal to humanity. Never, if I can help it, shall be forgotten those immense and divine labors in the hospitals of Washington, among the wounded of the war, to which he voluntarily devoted himself, as the best service he could render to his struggling country, and which illustrate that boundless love which is at once the dominant element of his character, and the central source of his genius. How can I tell the nature and extent of that



sublime ministrations? During those years, Washington was a city in whose unbuilt places and around whose borders were thickly planted dense white clusters of barracks. These were the hospitals—neat, orderly, rectangular, strange towns, whose every citizen lay drained with sickness or wrung with pain. There, in those long wards, in rows of cots on either side, were stretched, in all attitudes and aspects of mutilation, of pale repose, of contorted anguish, of death, the martyrs of the war; and among them, with a soul that tenderly remembered the little children in many a dwelling mournful for those fathers, the worn and anxious wives, haggard with thinking of those husbands, the girls weeping their spirits from their eyes for those lovers, the mothers who from afar yearned to the bedsides of those sons, walked Walt Whitman, in the spirit of Christ, soothing, healing, consoling, restoring, night and day, for years; never failing, never tiring, constant, vigilant, faithful; performing, without fee or reward, his self-imposed duty; giving to the task all his time and means, and doing everything that it is possible for one unaided human being to do. Others fail, others flag; good souls that came often and did their best, yield and drop away; he remains. Winter and summer, night and day, every day in the week, every week in the year, all the time, till the winter of '65, when for a few hours daily, during six months, his duties to the Government detain him; after that, all the time he can spare, he visits the hospitals. What does he do? See. At the red aceldama of Fredericksburg, in '62-'3, he is in a hospital on the banks of the Rappahannock; it is a large, brick house, full of wounded and dying; in front, at the foot of a tree, is a cart-load of amputated legs, arms, hands, feet, fingers; dead bodies shrouded in army blankets are near; there are fresh graves in the yard; he is at work in the house among the officers and men, lying, unclean and bloody, in their old clothes; he is upstairs and down; he is poor, he has nothing to give this time, but he writes letters for the wounded; he cheers up the desponding; he gives love. Some of the men, war-sad, passionately cling to him; they weep; he will sit for hours with them if it gives them comfort. Here he is in Washington, after Chancellorsville, at night, on the wharf; two boat-loads of wounded (and oh, such wounded!) have been landed; they lie scattered about on the landing, in the rain, drenched, livid, lying on the ground, on old quilts, on blankets; their heads, their limbs bound in bloody rags; a few torches light the scene; the ambulances, the callous drivers are here; groans, sometimes a scream, resound through the flickering light and the darkness. He is there, moving around; he soothes, he comforts, he consoles, he assists to lift the wounded into the ambulances; he helps to place the worst cases on the stretchers; his kiss is warm upon the pallid lips of some who are mere children; his tears drop upon the faces of the dying. Here he is in the hospitals of Washington—the Campbell, the Patent Office, the Eighth Street, the Judiciary, the Carver, the Douglas, the Armory Square. He writes letters; he writes to fathers, mothers, brothers, wives, sweethearts; some of the soldiers are poor penmen; some cannot get paper and envelopes; some fear to write lest they should worry the folks at home; he writes for them all; he uses that genius which shall endure to the latest generation, to say the felicitous, the consoling, the cheering, the prudent, the best word. He goes through the wards, he talks cheerfully, he distributes amusing reading matter; at night or by day, when the horrible monotony of the hospital weighs like lead on every soul, he reads to the men; he is careful to sit away from the cot of any poor fellow so sick or wounded as to be easily disturbed, but he gathers into a large group as many as he can, and amuses them with some story or enlivening game, like that of "Twenty Questions," or recites some little poem or speech, or starts some discussion, or with some device dispels the gloom. For his daily occupation, he goes from ward to ward, doing all he can to hearten and revive the spirits of the sufferers, and keep the balance in favor of their recovery. Usually, his plan is to pass, with haversack strapped across his shoulder, from cot to cot, distributing small gifts; his theory is that

these men, far from home, lonely, sick at heart, need more than anything some practical token that they are not forsaken, that some one feels a fatherly or brotherly interest in them; hence, he gives them what he can; to particular cases, entirely penniless, he distributes small sums of money, fifteen cents, twenty cents, thirty cents, fifty cents, not much to each, for there are many, but under the circumstances these little sums are and mean a great deal. He also distributes and directs envelopes, gives letter paper, postage stamps, tobacco, apples, figs, sweet biscuit, preserves, blackberries; gets delicate food for special cases; sometimes a dish of oysters or a dainty piece of meat, or some savory morsel for some poor creature who loathes the hospital fare, but whose appetite may be tempted. In the hot weather he buys boxes of oranges and distributes them, grateful to lips baked with fever; he buys boxes of lemons, he buys sugar, to make lemonade for those parched throats of sick soldiers; he buys canned peaches, strawberries, pears; he buys ice cream and treats the whole hospital; he buys whatever luxuries his limited resources will allow, and he makes them go as far as he can. Where does he get the means for this expenditure? For Walt Whitman is poor; he is poor, and has a right to be proud of his poverty, for it is the sacred, the ancient, the immemorial poverty of goodness and genius. He gets the means by writing for newspapers; he expends all he gets upon his boys, his darlings, the sick and maimed soldiers—the young heroes of the land who saved their country, the laborers of America who fought for the hopes of the world. He adds to his own earnings the contributions of noble souls, often strangers, who, in Boston, in New York, in Providence, in Brooklyn, in Salem, in Washington and elsewhere, have heard that such a man walks the hospitals, and who volunteer to send him this assistance; when at last he gets a place under Government, and till Mr. Harlan turns him out, he has a salary which he spends in the same way; sometimes his wrung heart gets the better of his prudence, and he spends till he himself is in difficulties. He gives all his money, he gives all his time, he gives all his love. To every inmate of the hospital something, if only a vital word, a cheering touch, a caress, a trifling gift; but always in his rounds he selects the special cases, the sorely wounded, the deeply despondent, the homesick, the dying; to these he devotes himself; he buoys them up with fond words, with caresses, with personal affection; he bends over them, strong, clean, cheerful, perfumed, loving, and his magnetic touch and love sustain them. He does not shrink from the smell of their sickening gangrene; he does not flinch from their bloody and rotten mutilations; he draws nigher for all that; he sticks closer; he dresses those wounds; he fans those burning temples; he moistens those parched lips; he washes those wasted bodies; he watches often and often in the dim ward by the sufferer's cot all night long; he reads from the New Testament, the words sweeter than music to the sinking soul; he soothes with prayer the bedside of the dying; he sits, mournful and loving, by the wasted dead. How can I tell the story of his labors? How can I describe the scenes among which he moved with such endurance and devotion, watched by me, for years?

Few know the spectacle presented by those grim wards. It was hideous. I have been there at night when it seemed that I should die with sympathy if I stayed;—when the horrible attitudes of anguish, the horizontal shapes of cadaver on the white cots, the quiet sleepers, the excruciated emaciations of men, the bloody bandages, the smell of plastered sores, the dim lamplight, the long white ward, the groans of some patient half hidden behind a screen, naked, shorn of both arms, held by the assistant upon a stool, made up a scene whose well-compounded horror is unspeakable. Now realize a man without worldly inducement, without reward, from love and compassion only, giving up his life to scenes like these; foregoing pleasure and rest for vigils, as in chambers of torture, among the despairing, the mangled, the dying, the forms upon which shell and rifle and sabre had wrought every bizarre atrocity of mutilation; immuring himself in

the air of their sighs, their moans, the mutter and scream of their delirium; breathing the stench of their putrid wounds; taking up his part and lot with them, living a life of privation and denial, and hoarding his scanty means for the relief and mitigation of their anguish. That man is Walt Whitman! I said his labors have been immense. The word is well chosen. I speak within bounds when I say that, during those years, he has been in contact with, and, in one form or another, either in hospital or on the field, personally ministered to upward of one hundred thousand sick and wounded men. You mothers of America, these were your sons! Faithfully, and with a mother's love, he tended them for you! Many and many a life has he saved—many a time has he felt his heart grow great with that delicious triumph many a home owes its best beloved to him. Sick and wounded, officers and privates, the black soldiers as well as the white, the teamsters, the poor creatures in the contraband camps, the rebel the same as the loyal—he did his best for them all; they were all sufferers, they were all men.—Let him pass. I note Thoreau's saying, that he suggests something more than human. It is true. I see it in his book and in his life. To that something more than human which is also in all men—to the hour of judgment, to the hour of sanity, let me resign him. Not for such as I to vindicate such as he. Not for him, perhaps, the recognition of his day and generation. But a life and deeds like his, lightly esteemed by men, sink deep into the memory of Man. Great is the stormy fight of Zutphen; it is the young lion of English Protestantism springing in haughty fury for the defence of the Netherlands from the bloody ravin of Spain; but Philip Sidney passing the flask of water from his own lips to the dying soldier looms gigantic, and makes all the foreground of its noble purpose and martial rage; and whatever be the verdict of the present, sure am I that hereafter and to the latest ages, when Bull Run and Shiloh and Port Hudson, when Vicksburg and Stone River and Fort Donelson, when Pea Ridge and Chancellorsville and Gettysburg and the Wilderness, and the great march from Atlanta to Savannah, and Richmond rolled in flame, and all the battles for the life of the Republic against her last internal foe are gathered up in accumulated terraces of struggle upon the mountain of history, well-relieved against those bright and bloody tumultuous giant tableaux, and all the dust and thunder of a noble war, the men and women of America will love to gaze upon the stalwart form of the good gray poet, bending to heal the hurts of their wounded and soothe the souls of their dying, and the deep and simple words of the last great martyr will be theirs, "Well, he *looks* like A MAN."

So let me leave him. And if there be any who think this tribute in bad taste, even to a poet so great, a person so unusual, a man so heroic and loving, I answer, that when, on grounds of taste, foes withhold detraction, friends may withhold eulogy; and that at any rate I recognize no reason for keeping back just words of love and reverence when, as in this case, they must glow upon the sullen foil of the printed hatreds of years. To that long record of hostility, I am only proud to be able to oppose this record of affection. And with respect to the crowning enmity of the Secretary of the Interior, let no person misjudge the motives upon which I denounce it. Personally, apart from this act, I have nothing against Mr. Harlan. He is of my own party; and my politics have been from my youth essentially the same as his own. I do not know him; I have never even seen him; I criticise no attitude nor action of his life but this; and I criticise this with as little personality as I can give to an action so personal. I withhold, too, as far as I can, every expression of resentment; and no one who knew all I know of this matter could fail to credit me with singular and great moderation. For, behind what I have related, there is another history, every incident of which I have recovered from the obscurity to which it was confided; and, as I think of it, it is with difficulty that I restrain my just indignation. Instead of my comparatively cold and sober treatment, this transaction deserves rather the pitiless exposure, the measureless,

stern anger, the red-hot steel scourge of Juvenal. But I leave untold its darkest details, and, waiving every other consideration, I rest solely and squarely on the general indignity and injury this action offers to intellectual liberty. I claim that to expel an author from a public office and subject him to public contumely, solely because he has published a book which no one can declare immoral without declaring all the grand books immoral, is to affix a penalty to thought, and to obstruct the freedom of letters. I declare this act the audacious captain of a series of acts, and a style of opinions whose tendency and effect throughout Christendom is to dwarf and degrade literature, and to make great books impossible, except under pains of martyrdom. As such, I arraign it before every liberal and thoughtful mind. I denounce it as a sinister precedent; as a ban upon the free action of genius; as a logical insult to all-commanding literature; and as in every way a most serious and heinous wrong. Difference of opinion there may and must be upon the topics which in these pages I have grouped around it, but upon the act itself there can be none. As I drag it up here into the sight of the world, I call upon every scholar, every man of letters, every editor, every good fellow everywhere who wields the pen, to make common cause with me in rousing upon it the full tempest of reprobation it deserves. I remember Tennyson, a spirit of vengeance over the desecrated grave of Moore; I think of Scott rolling back the tide of obloquy from Byron; I see Addison gilding the blackening fame of Swift; I mark Southampton befriending Shakespeare; I recall Du Bellay enshielding Rabelais; I behold Hutten fortressing Luther; here is Boccaccio lifting the darkness from Dante, and scattering flame on his foes in Florence; this is Bembo protecting Pomponatius; that is Grostate enfolding Roger Bacon from the monkish fury; there, covered with light, is Aristophanes defending AEschylus; and if there lives aught of that old chivalry of letters, which in all ages has sprung to the succor and defence of genius, I summon it to act the part of honor and duty upon a wrong which, done to a single member of the great confraternity of literature, is done to all, and which flings insult and menace upon every immortal page that dares transcend the wicked heart or the constricted brain. God grant that not in vain upon this outrage do I invoke the judgment of the mighty spirit of literature, and the fires of every honest heart!

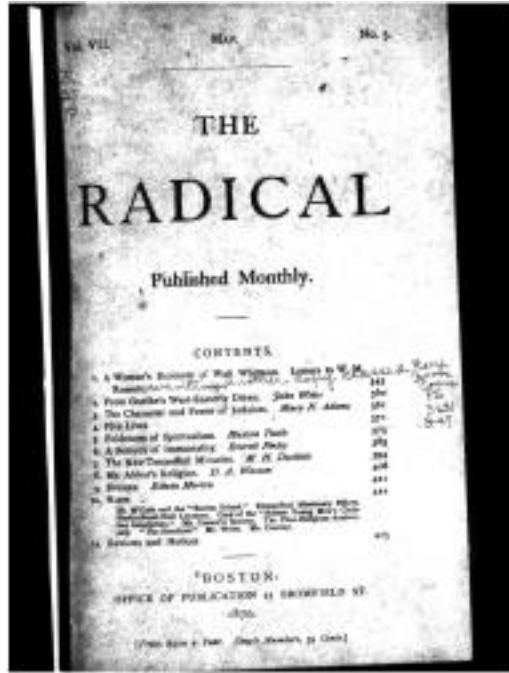
WILLIAM DOUGLAS O'CONNOR.

1. Pleasure a mean lie saddened. Stopping en route at Cambridge, the bearer of this letter was informed by one of its most distinguished resident authors that Walt Whitman was "nothing but a low New York rowdy," "a common street blackguard," and he accordingly did not venture to present the letter.
2. Mr. Harlan had said that *Leaves of Grass* ought to be publicly burned.
3. Novum Organum; Aphorism CXX.

Appendix 5

Boston Radical, where Anne Gilchrist's article, "A Woman's Estimate of Walt Whitman" first appeared in the US

Sample cover and Manifesto



Boston Public Library

Anne Gilchrist's "A Woman's Estimate of Walt Whitman" appeared in the May issue of the *Boston Radical*, 7 (1870), 345–359, reprinted in *In Re Walt Whitman* (1893), ed. Horace L. Traubel, Richard Maurice Bucke, and Thomas B. Harned, 41–55, and *The Letters of Anne Gilchrist and Walt Whitman*, ed. Thomas B. Harned [New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1918], 3–22.

Here, the *Boston Radical* manifesto, in full text

THE RADICAL.

The Radical is a medium for the freest expression of thought on all religious and social topics. No question of public interest is to be pronounced settled and arbitrarily excluded from its pages in deference to the popular sentiment. The alarm bells of ignorance, bigotry, sentimental-piety, wherever heard, must swing out their force unheeded. It does not believe that the world is to be upset, nor the providence of nature set on fire, or balked, by the frank expression of any man's or woman's opinion, on even the most delicate subjects; but quite the contrary. Neither clear ideas nor good morals are the product of fear. Society must be able to bear the strain of all open,

earnest inquiry after truth. If there be any truth too timid to grant equal terms to error, it will be safer to have it routed until pride pricks up its courage. The Radical would not covertly suppress error, but openly, with full faith in human nature under the sway of freedom, win the day against it.

The Contributors to *The Radical* are responsible each for his or her own productions, but for no others.

#### THE TRANSITION.

The present time is remarkable for an intellectual inquisitiveness, not confined to the few, but showing itself in this country among all classes of people, which asks continually, What is the fact? The authority of tradition has well nigh lost its ground. Even doctrines and notions which tradition has transmitted, are now defended not as formerly upon the simple assumed fact of their being a divine revelation, but the most ingenious minds are taxed to show their agreement with plain common sense, or reason. The pulpit scarce anywhere retains its ancient power. It does not speak by authority. In many cases it still quotes authorities, but with no effect beyond putting the people to sleep. They abandon their own Church to hear modern topics treated of in a more modern style. We have reached an epoch when great questions confront common people: questions which belong to their life in the present world. Salvation in the next is a theme worn threadbare to little purpose. But every person is now interested in discussions of character. And when such themes are reached, "Tis a whole population out in search of religion."

This fact must not be lost sight of. The movement is democratic. It is the stir of the populace. The people are at last thrown upon their own resources. They have asked for bread and received a stone. They must quit begging. What begger ever received good, sweet, fresh bread? They need not only to eat but each has the highest reasons for earning what he eats. It is the same with a man's ideas. Taken from another, with no quickening of his own mind to grow into them, thus making them his own, though they were bread of life to the other, what are they to him but a stone? He wants bread descending out of his own heavens. Thought alone,—his own thinking—can it down fresh every morning for the day's strength and peace.

This lesson, as we have stated, many people of our day are learning. We must look for a great variety of thought and statement. And we must insist on setting no limits. "Unlimited inquiry" and no restrictions at all. Every problem, social, religious, or political, is to be thought out to the end. Heresy must have a title of honor, if need be; certainly the heretic must have all the respect due him as a man. Faith in free thought as the only power able to save to the uttermost, is the faith our time demands. Error can only be corrected in this manner.

If the signs do not wholly fail, the people of America are launched upon a revolution more important than they or any other people, have ever passed through. Where it will conduct them, perhaps the wisest do not more than partially foresee. But that a new development of the religious nature of man, under the lead and inspiration of noble ideas, is in progress, cannot be doubted.

#### PARAGRAPHS.

If our day has any new lesson, it is that of self-respect. We object to being captured, led away, and drilled for army service, under whatever leader, and however rich the plunder. We know that we can serve no spiritual cause in that way. We witness daily, the failure of great religious organizations. Out of the ranks men quietly walk to put their full force into some individual work. Each seeks freedom to follow his own highest impulse. It is a blind judgment that pronounces this action selfish. Such work can be done with a public spirit as truly as the other.

Every such man knows that his true work will enrich his fellows. He could not withhold its benefits, if he were disposed to.

The religious impulse of the time seems to be to throw away whip, and sword, and banner, even. No more long processions. No more great "Captains of Salvation." God has finished with us as babes. He will no longer hold us up, but is withdrawing all outward supports. He does not now seem to say, "This is my beloved son;" but "These are my beloved principles, my well-considered laws." It leaves us in bewilderment for the time being. It puts us on hard fare. But it is the fresh start of the race for greater power and nobility.

The simple question remains, How much man? Man is himself the problem, and every man is to solve himself. The question of rank is trivial. The energy bequeathed by a trust of ourselves, of the laws of our own being; increasing the freedom in which these shall perform for us their highest office; conducts us safely in the ways of life, and yields all of manhood there is in store for us. It is given us to create the highest within ourselves. We need not be alarmed if by tomorrow at twelve o'clock we are not 'saved.' We need not be saving ourselves at any time. But, each at his proper work! lost in that, he will save himself, and peace.

Jesus looked upon his little band of weak disciples, and said, "It is expedient for you that I go away." They depended on him to that extent he had no faith in them. He stood in the way of their own natural strength. He must leave, and thus 'prepare a place' for them. "In my father's house are many mansions." This house is the universe. There are as 'many mansions' in it as souls. Each soul is in possession of its own, and there has no superior.

Enthusiasm for a person has no such grand control of a man as has enthusiasm for an idea. The masters have all been led by ideas, the disciples by persons. The master 'takes a bee line for the cross,'—the disciple forsakes him.

The most any man has to do is to utter his convictions. These will bring what they are worth. If much obloquy, that is as good as anything else. It has even been pronounced a 'blessing.' It can be made such by good temper and patience.

Transition. —A correspondent writes, "Mr.—, our minister, continually announces his radicalism; but he quotes Jesus so perpetually and so solemnly that those who do not hear his other talk out of the pulpit, believe that he takes Christ in the orthodox way."

It will not do to denounce earnest men, or women, because they have come to the conclusion that some idol of ours, we are offering them to be worshipped, needs rather to be broken. They may be utterly mistaken; but it is best to acquit them of evil designs, and not suffer ourselves to grow sad when they go at large and seem as respectable as ourselves. If there is not room for us all, God has made a mistake.

## Appendix 6

Anne Gilchrist [1828-1885]

"A Woman's Estimate of Walt Whitman"

Gilchrist's "A Woman's Estimate of Walt Whitman" appeared in the May issue of the *Boston Radical*, 7 (1870), 345–359, reprinted in *In Re Walt Whitman* (1893), ed. Horace L. Traubel, Richard Maurice Bucke, and Thomas B. Harned, 41–55, and *The Letters of Anne Gilchrist and Walt Whitman*, ed. Thomas B. Harned [New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1918], 3–22.



# THE RADICAL.

MAY, 1870.

## A WOMAN'S ESTIMATE OF WALT WHITMAN.

[FROM LATE LETTERS BY AN ENGLISH LADY TO W. M. ROSSETTI.]

*London, Nov. 20, 1869.*

THE great satisfaction which I felt in arranging, about two years ago, the first edition (or rather selection) of Walt Whitman's poems published in England has been, in due course of time, followed by another satisfaction — and one which, rightly laid to heart, is both less mixed and more intense. A lady, whose friendship honors me, read the selection last summer, and immediately afterwards accepted from me the loan of the complete edition, and read that also. Both volumes raised in her a boundless and splendid enthusiasm, ennobling to witness. This found expression in some letters which she addressed to me at the time, and which contain (I affirm it without misgiving, and I hope not without some title to form an opinion) about the fullest, farthest-reaching, and most eloquent appreciation of Whitman yet put into writing, and certainly the most valuable, whether or not I or other readers find cause for critical dissent at an item here and there. The most valuable, I say, because this is the expression of what *a woman* sees in Whitman's poems, — a woman who has read

---

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1870, by S. H. MORSE, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

and thought much, and whom to know is to respect and esteem in every relation, whether of character, intellect, or culture.

I longed that what this lady had written should be published for the benefit of English, and more especially of American readers.\* She has generously acceded to my request. The ensuing reflections upon Whitman's poems contain several passages reproduced verbatim from the letters in question, supplemented by others which the same lady has added so as more fully to define and convey the impression which those unparalleled and deathless writings have made upon her.

W. M. ROSSETTI.

*June 22, 1869.* — I was calling on ——— a fortnight ago, and he put into my hands your edition of Walt Whitman's poems. I shall not cease to thank him for that. Since I have had it, I can read no other book: it holds me entirely spell-bound, and I go through it again and again with deepening delight and wonder.

*June 23.* — I am very sure you are right in your estimate of Walt Whitman. There is nothing in him that I shall ever let go my hold of. For me the reading of his poems is truly a new birth of the soul.

I shall quite fearlessly accept your kind offer of the loan of a complete edition, certain that great and divinely beautiful nature has not, could not infuse any poison into the wine he has poured out for us. And as for what you specially allude to, who so well able to bear it — I will say, to judge wisely of it — as one who, having been a happy wife and mother, has learned to accept all things with tenderness, to feel a sacredness in all? Perhaps Walt Whitman has forgotten — or, through some theory in his head, has overridden — the truth that our instincts are beautiful facts of nature, as well as our bodies; and that we have a strong instinct of silence about some things.

*July 11.* — I think it was very manly and kind of you to put the whole of Walt Whitman's poems into my hands; and that I have no other friend who would have judged them and me so wisely and generously.

I had not dreamed that words could cease to be words, and become electric streams like these. I do assure you that, strong as I am, I feel sometimes as if I had not bodily strength to read

many of these poems. In the series headed "Calamus," for instance, in some of the "Songs of Parting," the "Voice out of the Sea," the poem beginning "Tears, Tears," &c., there is such a weight of emotion, such a tension of the heart, that mine refuses to beat under it, — stands quite still, — and I am obliged to lay the book down for a while. Or again, in the piece called "Walt Whitman," and one or two others of that type, I am as one hurried through stormy seas, over high mountains, dazed with sunlight, stunned with a crowd and tumult of faces and voices, till I am breathless, bewildered, half dead. Then come parts and whole poems in which there is such calm wisdom and strength of thought, such a cheerful breadth of sunshine, that the soul bathes in them renewed and strengthened. Living impulses flow out of these that make me exult in life, yet look longingly towards "the superb vistas of Death." Those who admire this poem, and don't care for that, and talk of formlessness, absence of metre, &c., are quite as far from any genuine recognition of Walt Whitman as his bitter detractors. Not, of course, that all the pieces are equal in power and beauty, but that all are vital; they grew — they were not made. We criticise a palace or a cathedral; but what is the good of criticizing a forest? Are not the hitherto-accepted masterpieces of literature akin rather to noble architecture; built up of material rendered precious by elaboration; planned with subtile art that makes beauty go hand in hand with rule and measure, and knows where the last stone will come, before the first is laid; the result stately, fixed, yet such as might, in every particular, have been different from what it is (therefore inviting criticism), contrasting proudly with the careless freedom of nature, opposing its own rigid adherence to symmetry to her willful dallying with it? But not such is this book. Seeds brought by the winds from north, south, east, and west, lying long in the earth, not resting on it like the stately building, but hid in and assimilating it, shooting upwards to be nourished by the air and the sunshine and the rain which beat idly against that, — each bough and twig and leaf growing in strength and beauty its own way, a law to itself, yet, with all this freedom of spontaneous growth, the result inevitable, unalterable (therefore setting criti-

cism at naught), above all things, vital, — that is, a source of ever-generating vitality : such are these poems.

“ Roots and leaves themselves alone are these,  
Scents brought to men and women from the wild woods and from the pond-  
side,  
Breast sorrel and pinks of love, fingers that wind around tighter than vines,  
Gushes from the throats of birds hid in the foliage of trees as the sun is  
risen,  
Breezes of land and love, breezes set from living shores out to you on the  
living sea, — to you, O sailors !  
Frost-mellowed berries and Third-month twigs, offered fresh to young per-  
sons wandering out in the fields when the winter breaks up,  
Love-buds put before you and within you, whoever you are,  
Buds to be unfolded on the old terms.  
If you bring the warmth of the sun to them, they will open, and bring form,  
color, perfume, to you :  
If you become the aliment and the wet, they will become flowers, fruits, tall  
branches and trees.”

And the music takes good care of itself too. As if it *could* be otherwise ! As if those “ large, melodious thoughts,” those emotions, now so stormy and wild, now of unfathomed tenderness and gentleness, could fail to vibrate through the words in strong, sweeping, long-sustained chords, with lovely melodies winding in and out fitfully amongst them ! Listen, for instance, to the penetrating sweetness, set in the midst of rugged grandeur, of the passage beginning, —

“ I am he that walks with the tender and growing night ;  
I call to the earth and sea half held by the night.”

I see that no counting of syllables will reveal the mechanism of the music ; and that this rushing spontaneity could not stay to bind itself with the fetters of metre. But I know that the music is there, and that I would not for something change ears with those who cannot hear it. And I know that poetry must do one of two things, — either own this man as equal with her highest, completest manifestors, or stand aside, and admit that there is something come into the world nobler, diviner than herself, one that is free of the universe, and can tell its secrets as none before.

I do not think or believe this; but see it with the same unmistakable definiteness of perception and full consciousness that I see the sun at this moment in the noonday sky, and feel his rays glowing down upon me as I write in the open air. What more can you ask of the works of a man's mouth than that they should "absorb into you as food and air, to appear again in your strength, gait, face,"—that they should be "fibre and filter to your blood," joy and gladness to your whole nature?

I am persuaded that one great source of this kindling, vitalizing power—I suppose *the* great source—is the grasp laid upon the present, the fearless and comprehensive dealing with reality. Hitherto the leaders of thought have (except in science) been men with their faces resolutely turned backwards; men who have made of the past a tyrant that beggars and scorns the present, hardly seeing any greatness but what is shrouded away in the twilight, underground past; naming the present only for disparaging comparisons, humiliating distrust that tends to create the very barrenness it complains of; bidding me warm myself at fires that went out to mortal eyes centuries ago; insisting, in religion above all, that I must either "look through dead men's eyes," or shut my own in helpless darkness. Poets fancying themselves so happy over the chill and faded beauty of the past, but not making me happy at all,—rebellious always at being dragged down out of the free air and sunshine of to-day.

But this poet, this "athlete, full of rich words, full of joy," takes you by the hand, and turns you with your face straight forwards. The present is great enough for him, because he is great enough for it. It flows through him as a "vast oceanic tide," lifting up a mighty voice. Earth, "the eloquent, dumb, great mother," is not old, has lost none of her fresh charms, none of her divine meanings; still bears great sons and daughters, if only they would possess themselves and accept their birthright,—a richer, not a poorer, heritage than was ever provided before,—richer by all the toil and suffering of the generations that have preceded, and by the further unfolding of the eternal purposes. Here is one come at last who can show them

how ; whose songs are the breath of a glad, strong, beautiful life, nourished sufficingly, kindled to unsurpassed intensity and greatness by the gifts of the present.

“ Each moment and whatever happens thrills me with joy.”

“ O the joy of my soul leaning poised on itself, — receiving identity through materials, and loving them, — observing characters, and absorbing them !

O my soul vibrated back to me from them !

“ O the gleesome saunter over fields and hillsides !

The leaves and flowers of the commonest weeds, the moist, fresh stillness of the woods,

The exquisite smell of the earth at daybreak, and all through the forenoon.

“ O to realize space !

The plenteousness of all — that there are no bounds ;

To emerge, and be of the sky — of the sun and moon and the flying clouds, as one with them.

“ O the joy of suffering, —

To struggle against great odds, to meet enemies undaunted,

To be entirely alone with them — to find how much one can stand ! ”

I used to think it was great to disregard happiness, to press on to a high goal, careless, disdainful of it. But now I see that there is nothing so great as to be capable of happiness ; to pluck it out of “ each moment and whatever happens ; ” to find that one can ride as gay and buoyant on the angry, menacing, tumultuous waves of life as on those that glide and glitter under a clear sky ; that it is not defeat and wretchedness which come out of the storm of adversity, but strength and calmness.

See, again, in the pieces gathered together under the title “ Calamus,” and elsewhere, what it means for a man to love his fellow-man. Did you dream it before ? These “ evangel-poems of comrades and of love ” speak, with the abiding, penetrating power of prophecy, of a “ new and superb friendship ; ” speak not as beautiful dreams, unrealizable aspirations to be laid aside in sober moods, because they breathe out what now glows within the poet’s own breast, and flows out in action toward the men around him. Had ever any land before her poet, not only to

concentrate within himself her life, and, when she kindled with anger against her children who were treacherous to the cause her life is bound up with, to announce and justify her terrible purpose in words of unsurpassable grandeur (as in the poem beginning, "Rise, O days, from your fathomless deeps"), but also to go and with his own hands dress the wounds, with his powerful presence soothe and sustain and nourish her suffering soldiers, — hundreds of them, thousands, tens of thousands, — by day and by night, for weeks, months, years?

"I sit by the restless all the dark night; some are so young,  
Some suffer so much: I recall the experience sweet and sad.  
Many a soldier's loving arms about this neck have crossed and rested,  
Many a soldier's kiss dwells on these bearded lips: —

Kisses, that touched with the fire of a strange, new, undying eloquence the lips that received them! The most transcendent genius could not, untaught by that "experience sweet and sad," have breathed out hymns for her dead soldiers of such ineffably tender, sorrowful, yet triumphant beauty.

But the present spreads before us other things besides those of which it is easy to see the greatness and beauty; and the poet would leave us to learn the hardest part of our lesson unhelped if he took no heed of these; and would be unfaithful to his calling, as interpreter of man to himself and of the scheme of things in relation to him, if he did not accept all — if he did not teach "the great lesson of reception, neither preference nor denial." If he feared to stretch out the hand, not of condescending pity, but of fellowship, to the degraded, criminal, foolish, despised, knowing that they are only laggards in "the great procession winding along the roads of the universe," "the far-behind to come on in their turn," knowing the "amplitude of Time," how could he roll the stone of contempt off the heart as he does, and cut the strangling knot of the problem of inherited viciousness and degradation? And, if he were not bold and true to the utmost, and did not own in himself the threads of darkness mixed in with the threads of light, and own it with the same strength and directness that he tells of the light, and not in those vague generalities that everybody

uses, and nobody means, in speaking on this head,—in the worst, germs of all that is in the best; in the best, germs of all that is in the worst,—the *brotherhood* of the human race would be a mere flourish of rhetoric. And brotherhood is naught if it does not bring brother's love along with it. If the poet's heart were not "a measureless ocean of love" that seeks the lips and would quench the thirst of all, he were not the one we have waited for so long. Who but he could put at last the right meaning into that word "democracy," which has been made to bear such a burthen of incongruous notions?

"By God! I will have nothing that all cannot have their counterpart of on the same terms!"

flashing it forth like a banner, making it draw the instant allegiance of every man and woman who loves justice. All occupations, however homely, all developments of the activities of man, need the poet's recognition, because every man needs the assurance that for him also the materials out of which to build up a great and satisfying life lie to hand, the sole magic in the use of them, all of the right stuff in the right hands. Hence those patient enumerations of every conceivable kind of industry:—

"In them far more than you estimated — in them far less also."

Far more as a means, next to nothing as an end; whereas we are wont to take it the other way, and think the result something, but the means a weariness. Out of all come strength, and the cheerfulness of strength. I murmured not a little, to say the truth, under these enumerations, at first. But now I think that not only is their purpose a justification, but that the musical ear and vividness of perception of the poet have enabled him to perform this task also with strength and grace, and that they are harmonious as well as necessary parts of the great whole.

Nor do I sympathize with those who grumble at the unexpected words that turn up now and then. A quarrel with words is always, more or less, a quarrel with meanings; and here we are to be as genial and as wide as nature, and quarrel with



nothing. If the thing a word stands for exists by divine appointment (and what does not so exist?), the word need never be ashamed of itself; the shorter and more direct, the better. It is a gain to make friends with it, and see it in good company. Here, at all events, "poetic diction" would not serve, — not pretty, soft, colorless words, laid by in lavender for the special uses of poetry, that have had none of the wear and tear of daily life; but such as have stood most, as tell of human heart-beats, as fit closest to the sense, and have taken deep hues of association from the varied experiences of life — those are the words wanted here. We only ask to seize and be seized swiftly, overmasteringly, by the great meanings. We see with the eyes of the soul, listen with the ears of the soul; the poor old words that have served so many generations for purposes, good, bad, and indifferent, and become warped and blurred in the process, grow young again, regenerate, translucent. It is not mere delight they give us, — *that* the "sweet singers," with their subtly wrought gifts, their mellifluous speech, can give too in their degree; it is such life and health as enable us to pluck delights for ourselves out of every hour of the day, and taste the sunshine that ripened the corn in the crust we eat (I often seem to myself to do that).

Out of the scorn of the present came skepticism; and out of the large, loving acceptance of it comes faith. If *now* is so great and beautiful, I need no arguments to make me believe that the *nows* of the past and of the future were and will be great and beautiful too.

"I know I am deathless.

I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept by the carpenter's compass.

I know I shall not pass, like a child's carlacue cut with a burnt stick at night.

I know I am august.

I do not trouble my spirit to vindicate itself or be understood.

"My foothold is tenoned and mortised in granite:

I laugh at what you call dissolution,

And I know the amplitude of Time."

"No array of terms can say how much I am at peace about God and Death."

You argued rightly that my confidence would not be betrayed

by any of the poems in this book. None of them troubled me even for a moment; because I saw at a glance that it was not, as men had supposed, the heights brought down to the depths, but the depths lifted up level with the sunlit heights, that they might become clear and sunlit too. Always, for a woman, a veil woven out of her own soul—never touched upon even, with a rough hand, by this poet. But, for a man, a daring, fearless pride in himself, not a mock-modesty woven out of delusions—a very poor imitation of a woman's. Do they not see that this fearless pride, this complete acceptance of themselves, is needful for her pride, her justification? What! is it all so ignoble, so base, that it will not bear the honest light of speech from lips so gifted with "the divine power to use words?" Then what hateful, bitter humiliation for her, to have to give herself up to the reality! Do you think there is ever a bride who does not taste more or less this bitterness in her cup? But who put it there? It must surely be man's fault, not God's, that she has to say to herself, "Soul, look another way—you have no part in this. Motherhood is beautiful, fatherhood is beautiful; but the dawn of fatherhood and motherhood is not beautiful." Do they really think that God is ashamed of what he has made and appointed? And, if not, surely it is somewhat superfluous that they should undertake to be so for him.

"The full-spread pride of man is calming and excellent to the soul,"

Of a woman above all. It is true that instinct of silence I spoke of is a beautiful, imperishable part of nature too. But it is not beautiful when it means an ignominious shame brooding darkly. Shame is like a very flexible veil, that follows faithfully the shape of what it covers,—beautiful when it hides a beautiful thing, ugly when it hides an ugly one. It has not covered what was beautiful here; it has covered a mean distrust of a man's self and of his Creator. It was needed that this silence, this evil spell, should for once be broken, and the daylight let in, that the dark cloud lying under might be scattered to the winds. It was needed that one who could here indicate for us "the path between reality and the soul" should speak. That is what these beautiful, despised poems, the "Children of Adam,"

do, read by the light that glows out of the rest of the volume : light of a clear, strong faith in God, of an unfathomably deep and tender love for humanity, — light shed out of a soul that is “ possessed of itself.”

“ Natural life of me faithfully praising things,  
Corroborating for ever the triumph of things.”

Now silence may brood again ; but lovingly, happily, as protecting what is beautiful, not as hiding what is unbeautiful ; consciously enfolding a sweet and sacred mystery — august even as the mystery of Death, the dawn as the setting ; kindred grandeurs, which to eyes that are opened shed a hallowing beauty on all that surrounds and preludes them.

“ O vast and well-veiled Death !

“ O the beautiful touch of Death, soothing and benumbing a few moments,  
for reasons ! ”

He who can thus look with fearlessness at the beauty of Death may well dare to teach us to look with fearless, untroubled eyes at the perfect beauty of Love in all its appointed realizations. Now none need turn away their thoughts with pain or shame ; though only lovers and poets may say what they will, — the lover to his own, the poet to all, because all are in a sense his own. None need fear that this will be harmful to the woman. How should there be such a flaw in the scheme of creation that, for the two with whom there is no complete life, save in closest sympathy, perfect union, what is natural and happy for the one should be baneful to the other ? The utmost faithful freedom of speech, such as there is in these poems, creates in her no thought or feeling that shuns the light of heaven, none that are not as innocent and serenely fair as the flowers that grow ; would lead, not to harm, but to such deep and tender affection as makes harm or the thought of harm simply impossible. Far more beautiful care than man is aware of has been taken in the making of her, to fit her to be his mate. God has taken such care that *he* need take none ; none, that is, which consists in disguise-ment, insincerity, painful hushing-up of his true, grand, initiating nature. And, as regards the poet's utterances, which, it might

be thought, however harmless in themselves, would prove harmful by falling into the hands of those for whom they are manifestly unsuitable, I believe that even here fear is needless. For her innocence is folded round with such thick folds of ignorance, till the right way and time for it to accept knowledge, that what is unsuitable is also unintelligible to her; and, if no dark shadow from without be cast on the white page by misconstruction or by foolish mystery and hiding away of it, no hurt will ensue from its passing freely through her hands.

This is so, though it is little understood or realized by men. Wives and mothers will learn through the poet that there is rejoicing grandeur and beauty there wherein their hearts have so longed to find it; where foolish men, traitors to themselves, poorly comprehending the grandeur of their own or the beauty of a woman's nature, have taken such pains to make her believe there was none, — nothing but miserable discrepancy.

One of the hardest things to make a child understand is, that down underneath your feet, if you go far enough, you come to blue sky and stars again; that there really is no "down" for the world, but only in every direction an "up." And that this is an all-embracing truth, including within its scope every created thing, and, with deepest significance, every part, faculty, attribute, healthful impulse, mind, and body of a man (each and all facing towards and related to the Infinite on every side), is what we grown children find it hardest to realize too. Novalis said, "We touch heaven when we lay our hand on the human body;" which, if it mean anything, must mean an ample justification of the poet who has dared to be the poet of the body as well as of the soul, — to treat it with the freedom and grandeur of an ancient sculptor.

"Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy of the muse: — I say the form complete is worthier far."

"These are not parts and poems of the body only, but of the soul."

"O, I say now these are soul."

But while Novalis — who gazed at the truth a long way off, up in the air, in a safe, comfortable, German fashion — has been

admirably quoted by high authorities, the great American who has dared to rise up and wrestle with it, and bring it alive and full of power in the midst of us, has been greeted with a very different kind of reception, as has happened a few times before in the world in similar cases. Yet I feel deeply persuaded that a perfectly fearless, candid, ennobling treatment of the life of the body (so inextricably intertwined with, so potent in its influence on the life of the soul) will prove of inestimable value to all earnest and aspiring natures, impatient of the folly of the long prevalent belief that it is because of the greatness of the spirit that it has learned to despise the body, and to ignore its influences; knowing well that it is, on the contrary, just because the spirit is not great enough, not healthy and vigorous enough, to transfuse itself into the life of the body, elevating that and making it holy by its own triumphant intensity; knowing, too, how the body avenges this by dragging the soul down to the level assigned itself. Whereas the spirit must lovingly embrace the body, as the roots of a tree embrace the ground, drawing thence rich nourishment, warmth, impulse. Or, rather, the body is itself the root of the soul,—that whereby it grows and feeds. The great tide of healthful life that carries all before it must surge through the whole man, not beat to and fro in one corner of his brain.

“O the life of my senses and flesh, transcending my senses and flesh!”

For the sake of all that is highest, a truthful recognition of this life, and especially of that of it which underlies the fundamental ties of humanity,—the love of husband and wife, fatherhood, motherhood,—is needed. Religion needs it, now at last alive to the fact that the basis of all true worship is comprised in “the great lesson of reception, neither preference nor denial,” interpreting, loving, rejoicing in all that is created, fearing and despising nothing.

“I accept reality, and dare not question it.”

The dignity of a man, the pride and affection of a woman, need it too. And so does the intellect. For science has opened up such elevating views of the mystery of material existence that, if poetry

had not bestirred herself to handle this theme in her own way, she would have been left behind by her plodding sister. Science knows that matter is not, as we fancied, certain stolid atoms which the forces of nature vibrate through and push and pull about; but that the forces and the atoms are one mysterious, imperishable identity, neither conceivable without the other. She knows, as well as the poet, that destructibility is not one of nature's words; that it is only the relationship of things — tangibility, visibility — that are transitory. She knows that body and soul are one, and proclaims it undauntedly, regardless, and rightly regardless, of inferences. Timid onlookers, aghast, think it means that soul is body, — means death for the soul. But the poet knows it means body is soul, — the great whole imperishable; in life and in death continually changing substance, always retaining identity. For, if the man of science is happy about the atoms, if he is not balked or baffled by apparent decay or destruction, but can see far enough into the dimness to know that not only is each atom imperishable, but that its endowments, characteristics, affinities, electric and other attractions and repulsions — however suspended, hid, dormant, masked, when it enters into new combinations — remain unchanged, be it for thousands of years, and, when it is again set free, manifest themselves in the old way, shall not the poet be happy about the vital whole? shall the highest force, the vital, that controls and compels into complete subservience for its own purposes the rest, be the only one that is destructible? and the love and thought that endow the whole be less enduring than the gravitating, chemical, electric powers that endow its atoms? But identity is the essence of love and thought, — I still I, you still you. Certainly no man need ever again be scared by the "dark hush" and the little handful of refuse.

"You are not scattered to the winds — you gather certainly and safely around yourself."

"Sure as Life holds all parts together, Death holds all parts together."

"All goes onward and outward: nothing collapses."

"What I am, I am of my body; and what I shall be, I shall be of my body."

"The body parts away at last for the journeys of the soul."

Science knows that whenever a thing passes from a solid to a subtle air, power is set free to a wider scope of action. The poet knows it too, and is dazzled as he turns his eyes toward "the superb vistas of death." He knows that "the perpetual transfers and promotions" and "the amplitude of time" are for a man as well as for the earth. The man of science, with unwearied, self-denying toil, finds the letters and joins them into words. But the poet alone can make complete sentences. The man of science furnishes the premises; but it is the poet who draws the final conclusion. Both together are "swiftly and surely preparing a future greater than all the past." But, while the man of science bequeaths to it the fruits of his toil, the poet, this mighty poet, bequeaths himself—"Death making him really undying." He will "stand as nigh as the highest" to these men and women. For he taught them, in words which breathe out his very heart and soul into theirs, that "love of comrades" which, like the "soft-born measureless light," makes wholesome and fertile every spot it penetrates to, lighting up dark social and political problems, and kindling into a genial glow that great heart of justice which is the life-source of Democracy. He, the beloved friend of all, initiated for them a "new and superb friendship;" whispered that secret of a god-like pride in a man's self, and a perfect trust in woman, whereby their love for each other, no longer poisoned and stifled, but basking in the light of God's smile, and sending up to him a perfume of gratitude, attains at last a divine and tender completeness. He gave a faith-compelling utterance to that "wisdom which is the certainty of the reality and immortality of things, and of the excellence of things." Happy America, that he should be her son! One sees, indeed, that only a young giant of a nation could produce this kind of greatness, so full of the ardor, the elasticity, the inexhaustible vigor and freshness, the joyousness, the audacity of youth. But I, for one, cannot grudge anything to America. For, after all, the young giant is the old English giant,—the great English race renewing its youth in that magnificent land, "Mexican-breathed, Arctic-braced," and girding up its loins to start on a new career that shall match with the greatness of the new home.

## Appendix 7

John Burroughs [1837-1921]

*Notes on Walt Whitman, as poet and person* (New York: J.S. Redfield, 1871, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition), Preface, Table of Contents, and first two paragraphs of first section, entitled, *Leaves of Grass*

Cebrià Montoliu references this biography

### PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH Walt Whitman, as Poet and Person, remains yet comparatively an unknown, unregarded figure upon time's vast and crowded canvas of our age, I feel for reasons attempted to be set forth in the following pages that I am in some sort called upon to jot down, while they are vivid upon me, my observations of him and his writings. And I wish to give, without delay, a fair hint of the attitude my Notes hold toward their subject, and of the premises they assume and start from.

In History, at wide intervals, in different fields of action, there come (it is a thrice-told tale,) special developments of individualities, and of that something we suggest by the word Genius individuals whom their own days little suspect, and never realize, but who, it turns out, mark and make new eras, plant the standard again ahead, and in one man personify vast races or sweeping revolutions. I consider Walt Whitman such an individual. I consider that America is illustrated in him; and that Democracy, as now launched forth upon its many-vortexed experiment for good or evil, (and the end whereof no eye can foresee,) is embodied, and for the first time in Poetry grandly and fully uttered, in him.

My Notes come from personal contact, and doubtless from thoughts brought under that influence. The literary hints in them are experimental, and will show the student of Nature more than the student of books.

I confess I shelter much that I have written, within the conviction that almost any statement, touched from life, of a man already the subject of peculiar interest to choice circles both in this country and -in Europe, and destined to a general renown unlike any other the renown of personal endearment will prove welcome. And so I give them forth crude and ill-put as doubtless they will appear to the better judges yet hoping that they too may serve.

Note to the Second Edition. The following essay, as far at page 108, having been issued in 1867, was based of course on the editions of LEAVES or GRASS anterior to that time, of 1855, 57, 60, and especially of 1866-7. The last-named and fourth, though mentioned on page 22, following as " the completed edition," has now been superceded by a later and fuller one, the fifth, (see page 109 following}) the " exception " mentioned on page 22, and the " part still lacking," alluded to on page 71 of the present work, having necessitated, as appears, not only an important addition of new LEAVES, but a re-arrangement of the old ones.

The whole Volume being, in some respects, best understood when viewed as a series of growths, or strata, rising or starting out from a settled foundation or centre, and expanding in successive accumulations, I have thought it allowable to let my Notes, even pages 22 and 23, remain as they were originally jotted down, notwithstanding that I might alter certain passages if written over again now, and that a few lines



are rendered superfluous; but as they stand they in some sort represent the changes and stages alluded to, especially those signified by the edition of 1866-7. The Supplementary Notes commencing page 109 present what I have to say of the book of 1871-2.

It will be borne in mind that the present Notes were not designed merely for literary criticism of Walt Whitman's poems. While these poems certainly present difficult problems, and need study and time to their appreciation, I believe that from what has already been written concerning them, the determined investigator, amid many contradictor)\* speculations and reviews, will be able to glean the materials of the truth. [See LEAVES or GRASS IMPRINTS, 64 pages, 16 mo. Boston, Thayer & Eldridge, 1860; "THE GOOD GRAY POET, A Vindication", by W. D. O Connor, 46 pages, 8vo. New York, Bunce & Huntington. "A Woman's Estimate of Walt Whitman", THE RADICAL, May, 1870, / Boston.] But I desire, also, to put on record, out of my own observation that has continued since the opening of the war down to the present hour, and from the point of view of those who have known him best from childhood, and especially during these current years, an outline of the veritable form, manners, and doings of the man, and of his life, as he actually lives it to-day. There will come a time when these things will be in valuable. . J. B., June, 1871.

[...]

CONTENTS,

PART FIRST.

LEAVES OF GRASS.

FIRST ACQUAINTANCE with POEM AND POET ..... 9

THE EARLIER ISSUE\* OR EDITION! ..... 15

REVIEW or THE COMPLETED POEM ..... 21

STANDARD or THE NATURAL UNIVERSAL ..... 37

BEAUTY ..... , ..... 50

PERSONALITY, ETC ..... 57

FURTHER PRESENTATION\* AND POINTS- ..... 65

PART SECOND.

PERSONAL SKETCH ..... 77

DRUM-TAPS ..... 97

PART FIRST.  
LEAVES OF GRASS.

FORMERLY, during the period termed elastic, when literature was governed by recognized rules, he was considered the best poet who had composed the most perfect work, the most beautiful poem, the most intelligible, the most agreeable to read, the most complete in every respect, the Aeneid, the Gerusalemme, a fine tragedy.

To-day, something else is wanted. For us, the greatest poet is he who in his works most stimulates the reader's imagination and reflection, who excites him the most himself to poetize. The greatest poet is not he who has done the best ; it is he who suggests the most ; he, not all of whose meaning is at first obvious, and who leaves you much to desire, to explain, to study, much to complete in your turn. [SAINTE BEUVE. Nouveaux Lundi. (New Mondays.) Article on "The Last Five Months of the Life of Racine." Volume X. Paris edition, 1868.

## Appendix 8

José Martí [1853-1895]

“El poeta Walt Whitman” / El Partido Liberal / 1887

Parecía un dios anoche, sentado en un sillón de terciopelo rojo, todo el cabello blanco, la barba sobre el pecho, las cejas como un bosque, la mano en un cayado.» Esto dice un diario de hoy del poeta Walt Whitman, anciano de setenta años a quien los críticos profundos, que siempre son los menos, asignan puesto extraordinario en la literatura de su país y de su época. Sólo los libros sagrados de la antigüedad ofrecen una doctrina comparable, por su profético lenguaje y robusta poesía, a la que en grandiosos y sacerdotales apotegmas emite, a manera de bocanadas de luz, este poeta viejo, cuyo libro pasmoso está prohibido.

¿Cómo no, si es un libro natural? Las universidades y latines han puesto a los hombres de manera que ya no se conocen; en vez de echarse unos en brazos de los otros, atraídos por lo esencial y eterno, se apartan, piropeándose como placentas, por diferencias de mero accidente; como el budín sobre la budinera, el hombre queda amoldado sobre el libro o maestro enérgico con que le puso en contacto el azar o la moda de su tiempo: las escuelas filosóficas, religiosas o literarias, encogollan a los hombres, como al lacayo la librea; los hombres se dejan marcar, como los caballos y los toros, y van por el mundo ostentando su hierro; de modo que, cuando se ven delante del hombre desnudo, virginal, amoroso, sincero, potente -del hombre que camina que ama, que pelea, que rema-, del hombre que, sin dejarse cegar por la desdicha, lee la promesa de final ventura en el equilibrio y la gracia del mundo; cuando se ven frente al hombre padre, nervudo y angélico Walt Whitman, huyen como de su propia conciencia y se resisten a reconocer en esta humanidad fragante y superior el tipo verdadero de su especie, descolorida, encasacada, amañecada.

Dice el diario que ayer, cuando ese otro viejo adorable, Gladstone, acababa de aleccionar a sus adversarios en el Parlamento sobre la justicia de conceder un gobierno propio a Irlanda, parecía él como mastín pujante, erguido sin rival entre la turba, y ellos a sus pies como un tropel de dogos. Así parece Whitman, con su «persona natural», con su «naturaleza sin freno en original energía», con sus «miríadas de mancebos hermosos y gigantes», con su creencia en que «el más breve retoño demuestra que en realidad no hay muerte», con el recuento formidable de pueblos y razas en su *Saludo al mundo*, con su determinación de «callar mientras los demás discuten, e ir a bañarse y a admirarse a sí mismo, conociendo la perfecta propiedad y armonía de las cosas»; así parece Whitman, «el que no dice estas poesías por su peso»; el que «está satisfecho, y ve, baila, canta y ríe»; el que «no tiene cátedra, ni púlpito, ni escuela», cuando se le compra a esos poetas y filósofos de un detalle o de un solo aspecto; poetas de aguamiel, de patrón, de libro; figurines filosóficos o literarios.

Hay que estudiarlo, porque si no es el poeta de mejor gusto, es el más intrépido, abarcador y desembarazado de su tiempo. En su casita de madera, que casi está al borde de la miseria, luce en una ventana, orlado de luto, el retrato de Víctor Hugo; Emerson, cuya lectura purifica y exalta, le echaba el brazo por el hombro y le llamó su amigo; Tennyson, que es de los que ven las raíces de

las cosas, envía, desde su silla de roble en Inglaterra, ternísimos mensajes al «gran viejo»; Robert Buchanan, el inglés de palabra briosa, «¿qué habéis de saber de letras -grita a los norteamericanos-, si estáis dejando correr, sin los honores eminentes que le corresponden, la vejez de vuestro colosal Walt Whitman?»

La verdad es que su poesía, aunque al principio causa asombro, deja en el alma, atormentada por el empequeñecimiento universal, una sensación deleitosa de convalecencia. El se crea su gramática y su lógica. El lee en el ojo del buey y en la savia de la hoja. «¡Ése que limpia suciedades de vuestra casa, ése es mi hermano!» Su irregularidad aparente, que en el primer momento desconcierta, resulta luego ser, salvo breves instantes de portentoso extravío, aquel orden y composición sublimes con que se dibujan las cumbres sobre el horizonte.

El no vive en Nueva York, su «Manhattan querida», su «Manhattan de rostro soberbio y un millón de pies», a donde se asoma cuando quiere entonar «el canto de lo que ve a la Libertad»; vive, cuidado por «amantes amigos», pues sus libros y conferencias apenas le producen para comprar pan, en una casita arrinconada en un ameno recodo del campo, (Veritat ?) de donde en su carruaje de anciano le llevan los caballos que ama a ver a los «jóvenes forzudos» en sus diversiones viriles, a los «camaradas» que no temen codearse con este iconoclasta que quiere establecer «la institución de la camaradería», a ver los campos que crían, los amigos que pasan cantando del brazo, las parejas de novios, alegres y vivaces como las codornices. El lo dice en sus *Calamus*, el libro enormemente extraño en que canta el amor de los amigos: «Ni orgías, ni ostentosas paradas, ni la continua procesión de las calles, ni las ventanas atestadas de comercios, ni la conversación con los eruditos me satisface, sino que al pasar por mi Manhattan los ojos que encuentro me ofrezcan amor; amantes, continuos amantes es lo único que me satisface.» Es él como lo ancianos que anuncia al fin su libro prohibido, sus *Hojas de yerba*: «Anuncio miríadas de mancebos gigantescos, hermosos y de fina sangre; anuncio una raza de ancianos salvajes y espléndidos.»

Vive en el campo, donde el hombre natural labra al sol que lo curte, junto a sus caballos plácidos, la tierra libre; mas no lejos de la ciudad amable y férvida, con sus ruidos de vida, su trabajo graneado, su múltiple epopeya, el polvo de los carros, el humo de las fábricas jadeantes, el sol que lo ve todo, «los gañanes que charlan a la merienda sobre las pilas de ladrillos, la ambulancia que corre desalada con el héroe que acaba de caerse de un andamio, la mujer sorprendida en medio de turba por la fatiga augusta de la maternidad». Pero ayer vino Whitman del campo para recitar, ante un concurso de leales amigos, su oración sobre aquel otro hombre natural, aquella alma grande y dulce, «aquella poderosa estrella muerta del Oeste», aquel Abraham Lincoln. Todo lo culto de Nueva York asistió en silencio religioso a aquella plática resplandeciente, que por sus súbitos quiebros, tonos vibrantes, himnica fuga, olímpica familiaridad, parecía a veces como un cuchicheo de astros. Los criados a leche latina, académica o francesa, no podrían, acaso, entender aquella gracia heroica. La vida libre y decorosa del hombre en un continente nuevo ha creado una filosofía sana y robusta que está saliendo al mundo en epodos atléticos. A la mayor suma de hombres libres y trabajadores que vio jamás la tierra, corresponde una poesía de conjunto y de fe, tranquilizadora y solemne, que se levanta, como el sol del mar, incendiando las nubes; bordeando de fuego las crestas de las olas; despertando en las selvas fecundas de la orilla las flores fatigadas y los nidos. Vuela el polen; los picos cambian besos; se aparejan las ramas; buscan el sol las hojas, exhala todo música; con ese lenguaje de luz ruda habló Whitman de Lincoln.

Acaso una de las producciones más bellas de la poesía contemporánea es la mística trenodia que Whitman compuso a la muerte de Lincoln. La naturaleza entera acompaña en su viaje a la sepultura el féretro llorando. Los astros lo predijeron.

Las nubes venían ennegreciéndose un mes antes. Un pájaro gris cantaba en el pantano un canto de desolación. Entre el pensamiento y la seguridad de la muerte viaja el poeta por los campos conmovidos, como entre los campaneros. Con arte de músico agrupa, esconde y reproduce estos elementos tristes en una armonía total de crepúsculo. Parece, al acabar la poesía, como si la tierra toda estuviese vestida de negro, y el muerto la cubriera desde un mar al otro. Se ven las nubes, la luna cargada que anuncia la catástrofe, las alas largas del pájaro gris. (Es mucho más hermoso, extraño y profundo que *El cuervo* de Poe). El poeta trae al féretro un gajo de lilas.

Ya sobre las tumbas no gimen los sauces; la muerte es «la cosecha, la que abre la puerta, la gran reveladora»; lo que está siendo, fue y volverá a ser; en una grave y celeste primavera se confunden las oposiciones y penas aparentes; un hueso es una flor. Se oye de cerca el ruido de los soles que buscan con majestuoso movimiento su puesto definitivo en el espacio; la vida es un himno; la muerte es una forma oculta de la vida; santo es el sudor y el entozoario es santo; los hombres, al pasar, deben besarse en la mejilla; abráncense los vivos en amor inefable; amen la yerba, el animal, el aire, el mar, el dolor, la muerte; el sufrimiento es menos para las almas que el amor posee; la vida no tiene dolores para el que entiende a tiempo su sentido; del mismo germen son la miel, la luz y el beso; ¡en la sombra que resplandece en paz como una bóveda maciza de estrellas, levántase con música suavísima, por sobre los mundos dormidos como canes a sus pies, un apacible y enorme árbol de lilas!

Cada estado social trae su expresión a la literatura, de tal modo que, por las diversas fases de ella, pudiera contarse la historia de los pueblos con más verdad que por sus crónicas y sus décadas. No puede haber contradicciones en la naturaleza; la misma aspiración humana a hallar en el amor, durante la existencia, y en lo ignorado después de la muerte, un tipo perfecto de gracia y hermosura, demuestra que en la vida total han de ajustarse con gozo los elementos que en la porción actual de vida que atravesamos parecen desunidos y hostiles. La literatura que anuncie y propague el concierto final y dichoso de las contradicciones aparentes; la literatura que, como espontáneo consejo y enseñanza de la naturaleza, promulgue la identidad en una paz superior de los dogmas y pasiones rivales que en el estado elemental de los pueblos los dividen y ensangrientan; la literatura que inculquen en el espíritu espantadizo de los hombres una convicción tan arraigada de la justicia y belleza definitivas que las penurias y fealdades de la existencia no las descorazonen ni acibaren, no sólo revelará un estado social más cercano a la perfección que todos los conocidos, sino que, hermanando felizmente la razón y la gracia, proveerá a la humanidad, ansiosa de maravilla y de poesía, con la religión que confusamente aguarda desde que conoció la oquedad e insuficiencia de sus antiguos credos.

¿Quién es el ignorante que mantiene que la poesía no es indispensable a los pueblos? Hay gentes de tan corta vista mental, que creen que toda la fruta se acaba en la cáscara. La poesía, que congrega o disgrega, que fortifica o angustia, que apuntala o derriba las almas, que da o quita a los hombres la fe y el aliento, es más necesaria a los pueblos que la industria misma, pues ésta les proporciona el modo de subsistir, mientras que aquélla les da el deseo y la fuerza de la vida. ¿Adónde irá un pueblo de hombres que hayan perdido el hábito de pensar con fe en la significación y alcance de sus actos? Los mejores, los que unge la naturaleza con el sacro deseo de lo futuro, perderán, en un aniquilamiento doloroso y sordo, todo estímulo para sobrellevar las

fealdades humanas; y la masa, lo vulgar, la gente de apetitos, los comunes, procrearán sin santidad hijos vacíos, elevarán a facultades esenciales las que deben servirles de meros instrumentos y aturdirán con el bullicio de una prosperidad siempre incompleta la aflicción irremediable del alma, que sólo se complace en lo bello y grandioso.

La libertad debe ser, fuera de otras razones, bendecida, porque su goce, inspira al hombre moderno -privado a su aparición de la calma, estímulo y poesía de la existencia- aquella paz suprema y bienestar religioso que produce el orden del mundo en los que viven en él con la arrogancia y serenidad de su albedrío. Ved sobre los montes, poetas que regáis con lágrimas pueriles los altares desiertos. Creíais la religión perdida, porque estaba mudando de forma sobre vuestras cabezas. Levantaos, porque vosotros sois los sacerdotes. La libertad es la religión definitiva. Y la poesía de la libertad el culto nuevo. Ella aquieta y hermosea lo presente, deduce e ilumina lo futuro, y explica el propósito inefable y seductora bondad del universo.

Oíd lo que canta este pueblo trabajador y satisfecho; oíd a Walt Whitman. El ejercicio de sí lo encumbra a la majestad, la tolerancia a la justicia y el orden a la dicha. El que vive en un credo autocrático es lo mismo que una ostra en su concha, que sólo ve la prisión que la encierra y cree, en la oscuridad, que aquello es el mundo; la libertad pone alas a la ostra. Y lo que, oído en lo interior de la concha, parecía portentosa contienda, resulta a la luz del aire ser el natural movimiento de la savia en el pulso enérgico del mundo.

El mundo, para Walt Whitman, fue siempre como es hoy. Basta con que una cosa sea para que haya debido ser, y cuando ya no deba ser, no será. Lo que ya no es, lo que no se ve, se prueba por lo que es y se está viendo; porque todo está en todo, y lo uno explica lo otro; y cuando lo que es ahora no sea, se probará a su vez por lo otro; y cuando lo que es ahora no sea, se probará a su vez por lo que esté siendo entonces. Lo infinitésimo colabora para lo infinito, y todo está en su puesto, la tortuga, el buey, los pájaros, «propósitos alados». Tanta fortuna es morir como nacer, porque los muertos están vivos: «¡nadie puede decir lo tranquilo que está él sobre Dios y la muerte!». Se ríe de lo que llaman desilusión, y conoce la amplitud del tiempo; él acepta absolutamente el tiempo. En su persona se contiene todo: todo él está en todo; donde uno se degrada, él se degrada; él es la marea, el flujo y reflujo; ¿cómo no ha de tener orgullo en sí, si se siente parte viva e inteligente de la naturaleza? ¿Qué le importa a él volver al seno de donde partió y convertirse, al amor de la tierra húmeda, en vegetal útil, en flor bella? Nutrirá a los hombres, después de haberlos amado. Su deber es crear; el átomo que crea es de esencia divina; el acto en que se crea es exquisito y sagrado. Convencido de la identidad del universo, entona el «Canto de mí mismo». De todo teje el canto de sí: de los credos que contienden y pasan, del hombre que procrea y labora, de los animales que le ayudan, ¡ah!, de los animales, entre quienes «ninguno se arrodilla ante otro, ni es superior al otro, ni se queja». El se ve como heredero del mundo.

Nada le es extraño, y lo toma en cuenta todo, el caracol que se arrastra, el buey que con sus ojos misteriosos lo mira, el sacerdote que defiende una parte de la verdad como si fuese la verdad entera. El hombre debe abrir los brazos, y apretarlo todo contra su corazón, la virtud lo mismo que el delito, la suciedad lo mismo que la limpieza, la ignorancia lo mismo que la sabiduría; debe fundirlo en su corazón, como en un horno; sobre todo, debe dejar caer la barba blanca. Pero, eso sí, «ya se ha denunciado y tonteado bastante»; regaña a los incrédulos, a los sofistas, a los habladores; ¡procreen en vez de querellarse y añadan al mundo! ¡Créese con aquel respeto con que una devota besa la escalera del altar!

El es de todas las castas, credos y profesiones, y en todas encuentra justicia y poesía. Mide las religiones sin ira; pero cree que la religión perfecta está en la naturaleza. La religión y la vida están en la naturaleza. Si hay un enfermo, «¡idos -dice al médico y al cura- , ya me apegaré a él, abriré las ventanas, le amaré, le hablaré al oído; ya veréis como sana; vosotros sois palabra y yerba, pero yo puedo más que vosotros, porque soy amor». El Creador es «el verdadero amante, el camarada perfecto»; los hombres son «camaradas», y valen más mientras más aman y creen, aunque todo lo que ocupe su lugar y su tiempo vale tanto como cualquiera: mas vean todos el mundo por sí, porque él, Walt Whitman, que siente en sí el mundo desde que éste fue creado, sabe, por lo que el sol y el aire libre le enseñan, que una salida de sol le revela más que el mejor libro. Piensa en los orbes, apetece a las mujeres, se siente poseído de amor universal y frenético; oye levantarse de las escenas de la creación y de los oficios del hombre un concierto que le inunda de ventura, y cuando se asoma el río, a la hora en que se cierran los talleres y el Sol de puesta enciende el agua, siente que tiene cita con el Creador, reconoce que el hombre es definitivamente bueno y ve que de su cabeza reflejada en la corriente, surgen aspas de luz.

Pero ¿qué dará idea de su vasto y ardientísimo amor? Con el fuego de Safo ama este hombre al mundo. A él le parece el mundo un lecho gigantesco. El lecho es para él un altar. «Yo haré ilustres, dice, las palabras y las ideas que los hombres han prostituido con su sigilo y su falsa vergüenza; yo canto y consagro lo que consagraba el Egipto.» Una de las fuentes de su originalidad es la fuerza hercúlea con que postra a las ideas como si fuera a violarlas, cuando sólo va a darles un beso, con la pasión de un santo. Otra fuente es la forma material, brutal, corpórea, con que expresa sus más delicadas idealidades. Ese lenguaje ha parecido lascivo a los que son incapaces de entender su grandeza; imbéciles ha habido que cuando celebra en *Calamus*, con las imágenes más ardientes de la lengua humana, el amor de los amigos, creyeron ver, con remilgos de colegial impúdico, el retorno a aquellas viles ansias de Virgilio por Cebetes y de Horacio por Giges y Licisco. Y cuando canta en *Los hijos de Adán* el pecado divino, en cuadros ante los cuales palidecen los más calurosos del *Cantar de los cantares*, tiembla, se encoge, se vierte y dilata, enloquece de orgullo y virilidad satisfecha, recuerda al dios del Amazonas, que cruzaba sobre los bosques y los ríos esparciendo por la tierra las semillas de la vida: «¡mi deber es crear!» «Yo canto al cuerpo eléctrico», dice en *Los hijos de Adán*; y es preciso haber leído en hebreo las genealogías patriarcales del Génesis; es preciso haber seguido por las selvas no holladas las comitivas desnudas y carnívoras de los primeros hombres para hallar semejanza apropiada a la enumeración de satánica fuerza en que describe, como un héroe hambriento que se relame los labios sanguinosos, las pertenencias del cuerpo femenino. ¿Y decís que este hombre es brutal? Oíd esta composición que, como muchas suyas, no tiene más que dos versos: *Mujeres*

*hermosas*. «Las mujeres se sientan y se mueven de un lado para otro, jóvenes algunas, algunas viejas; las jóvenes son hermosas, pero las viejas son más hermosas que las jóvenes.» Y esta otra: *Madre y niño*. Ve el niño que duerme anidado en el regazo de su madre. La madre que duerme, y el niño: ¡silencio! Los estudió largamente, largamente. El prevé que, así como ya se juntan en grado extremo la virilidad y la ternura en los hombres de genio superior, en la paz deleitosa en que descansará la vida han de juntarse, con solemnidad y júbilo dignos del Universo, las dos energías que han necesitado dividirse para continuar la faena de la creación.

Si entra en la yerba, dice que la yerba le acaricia, que «ya siente mover sus coyunturas»; y el más inquieto novicio no tendría palabras tan fogosas para describir la alegría de su cuerpo, que él mira como parte de su alma, al sentirse abrasado por el mar. Todo lo que vive le ama: la tierra, la

noche, el mar le aman; «¡penétrame, oh mar, de humedad amorosa!» Paladea el aire. Se ofrece a la atmósfera como un novio trémulo. Quiere puertas sin cerradura y cuerpos en su belleza natural; cree que santifica cuanto toca o le toca, y halla virtud a todo lo corpóreo; él es «Walt Whitman, un cosmos, el hijo de Manhattan, turbulento, sensual, carnoso, que come, bebe y engendra», ni más ni menos que todos los demás. Pinta a la verdad como una amante frenética, que invade su cuerpo y, ansiosa de poseerle, lo liberta de sus ropas. [escena del Tambour] Pero cuando en la clara medianoche, libre el alma de ocupaciones y de libros, emerge entera, silenciosa y contemplativa del día noblemente empleado, medita en los temas que más le complacen: en la noche, el sueño y la muerte; en el canto de lo universal, para beneficio del hombre común; en que «es muy dulce morir avanzando» y caer al pie del árbol primitivo, mordido por la última serpiente del bosque, con el hacha en las manos.

Imagínese qué nuevo y extraño efecto producirá ese lenguaje henchido de animalidad soberbia cuando celebra la pasión que ha de unir a los hombres. Recuerda en una composición del *Calamus* los goces más vivos que debe a la naturaleza y a la patria; pero sólo a las olas de océano halla dignidad de corear, a la luz de la luna, su dicha al ver dormido junto a sí al amigo que ama. El ama a los humildes, a los caídos, a los heridos, hasta a los malvados. No desdeña a los grandes, porque para él son grandes los útiles. Echa el brazo por el hombro a los carreros, a los marineros, a los labradores. Caza y pesca con ellos, y en la siega sube con ellos al tope del carro cargado. Más bello que un emperador triunfante le parece el negro vigoroso que, apoyado en la lanza detrás de sus percherones, guía su carro sereno por el revuelto Broadway. El entiende todas las virtudes, recibe todos los premios, trabaja en todos los oficios, sufre con todos los dolores. Siente un placer heroico cuando se detiene en el umbral de una herrería y ve que los mancebos, con el torso desnudo, revuelan por sobre sus cabezas los martillos, y dan cada uno a su turno. El es el esclavo, el preso, el que pelea, el que cae, el mendigo. Cuando el esclavo llega a sus puertas perseguido y sudoroso, le llena la bañera, lo sienta a su mesa; en el rincón tiene cargada la escopeta para defenderlo; si se lo vienen a atacar, matará a su perseguidor y volverá a sentarse a la mesa, ¡como si hubiera matado una víbora!

Walt Whitman, pues, está satisfecho; ¿qué orgullo le ha de punzar, si sabe que se para en yerba o en flor? ¿qué orgullo tiene un clavel, una hoja de salvia, una madreelva?, ¿cómo no ha de mirar él con tranquilidad los dolores humanos, si sabe que por sobre ellos está un ser inacabable a quien aguarda la inmersión venturosa en la naturaleza? ¿cómo no ha de mirar él con tranquilidad los dolores humanos, si sabe que por sobre ellos está un ser inacabable a quien aguarda la inmersión venturosa en la naturaleza? ¿Qué prisa le ha de azuzar, si cree que todo está donde debe, y que la voluntad de un hombre no ha de desviar el camino del mundo? Padece, sí, padece; pero mira como un ser menor y acabadizo al que en él sufre, y siente por sobre las fatigas, y miserias a otro ser que no puede sufrir, porque conoce la universal grandeza. Ser como es le es bastante y asiste impassible y alegre al curso, silencioso o loado, de su vida. De un solo bote echa a un lado, como excrescencia inútil, la lamentación romántica: «¡no he de pedirle al cielo que baje a la tierra para hacer mi voluntad!» Y qué majestad no hay en aquella frase en que dice que ama a los animales «porque no se quejan». La verdad es que ya sobran los acobardadores; urge ver cómo es el mundo para no convertir en montes las hormigas; dese fuerzas a los hombres, en vez de quitarles con lamentos las pocas que el dolor les deja; pues los llagados ¿van por las calles enseñando sus llagas? Ni las dudas ni la ciencia le mortifican. «Vosotros sois los primeros, dice a los científicos; pero la ciencia no es más que un departamento de mi morada, no es toda mi morada; ¡qué pobres parecen las argucias ante un hecho heroico! A la ciencia, salve y salve al



alma, que está por sobre toda la ciencia.» Pero donde su filosofía ha domado enteramente el odio, como mandan los magos, es en la frase, no exenta de la melancolía de los vencidos, con que arranca de raíz toda razón de envidia: ¿por qué tendría yo celos, dice, de aquel de mis hermanos que haga lo que yo no puedo hacer? «Aquel que cerca de mí muestra un pecho más ancho que el mío, demuestra la anchura del mío.» «¡Penetre el sol la tierra, hasta que toda ella sea luz clara y dulce, como mi sangre. Sea universal el goce. Yo canto la eternidad de la existencia, la dicha de nuestra vida y la hermosura implacable del universo. Yo uso zapato de becerro, un cuello espacioso y un bastón hecho de una rama de árbol!»

Y todo eso lo dice en frase apocalíptica. ¿Rimas o acentos? ¡Oh no!, su ritmo está en las estrofas, ligadas, en medio de aquel caos aparente de frases superpuestas y convulsas, por una sabia composición que distribuye en grandes grupos musicales las ideas, como la natural forma poética de un pueblo que no fabrica piedra a piedra, sino a enormes bloqueadas.

El lenguaje de Walt Whitman, enteramente diverso del usado hasta hoy por los poetas, corresponde, por la extrañeza y pujanza, a su cíclica poesía y a la humanidad nueva, congregada como un *continente* fecundo con portentos tales que en verdad no caben en liras ni serventesios remilgados. Ya no se trata de amores escondidos, ni de damas que mudan de galanes, ni de la queja estéril de los que no tienen la energía necesaria para domar la vida, ni la discreción que conviene a los cobardes. No de rimillas se trata, y dolores de alcoba, sino del nacimiento de una era, del alba de la religión definitiva y de la renovación del hombre; trátase de una fe que ha de sustituir a la que ha muerto y surge con un claro radiante de la arrogante paz del hombre redimido; trátase de escribir los libros sagrados de un pueblo que reúne, al caer del mundo antiguo, todas las fuerzas vírgenes de la libertad a las ubres y pompas ciclópeas de la salvaje naturaleza; trátase de reflejar en palabras el ruido de las muchedumbres que se asientan, de las ciudades que trabajan y de los mares domados y los ríos esclavos. ¿Apareará consonantes Walt Whitman y pondrá en mansos dísticos estas montañas de mercaderías, bosques de espinas, pueblos de barcos, combates donde se acuestan a abonar el derecho millones de hombres y sol que en todo impera, y se derrama con límpido fuego por el vasto paisaje?

¡Oh!, no: Walt Whitman habla en versículos, sin música aparente, aunque a poco de oírla se percibe que aquello suena como el casco de la tierra cuando vienen por él, descalzos y gloriosos, los ejércitos triunfantes. En ocasiones parece el lenguaje de Whitman el frente colgado de reses de una carnicería; otras parece un canto de patriarcas, sentados en coro, con la suave tristeza del mundo a la hora en que el humo se pierde en las nubes; suena otras veces como un beso brusco, como un forzamiento, como el chasquido del cuero reseco que revienta al sol; pero jamás pierde la frase su movimiento rítmico de ola. El mismo dice cómo hable: «en alaridos proféticos»; «ésta son, dice unas pocas palabras indicadoras de lo futuro». Eso es su poesía, índice; el sentido de lo universal pervade el libro y le da, en la confusión superficial, una regularidad grandiosa; pero sus frases desligadas, flagelantes, incompletas, sueltas, más que expresan, emiten: «lanzo mis imaginaciones sobre las canosas montañas»; «di, tierra viejo nudo montuoso, ¿qué quieres de mí?»; «hago mi bárbara fanfarria sobre los techos del mundo».

No es él, no, de los que echan a andar un pensamiento pordiosero, que va tropezando y arrastrando bajo la opulencia visible de sus vestiduras regias. El no infla tomeguines para que parezcan águilas; él riega águilas, cada vez que abre el puño, como un sembrador riega granos. Un verso tiene cinco sílabas; el que le sigue cuarenta y águilas. El no esfuerza la comparación, y en verdad no compara, sino que dice lo que ve o recuerda con un complemento gráfico e

incisivo, y dueño seguro de la impresión de conjunto que se dispone a crear, emplea su arte, que oculta por entero, en reproducir los elementos de su cuadro con el mismo desorden con que los observó en la naturaleza. Si desvaría, no disuena, porque así vaga la mente sin orden ni esclavitud de un asunto a sus análogos; mas luego, como si sólo hubiese aflojado las riendas sin soltarlas, recógelas de súbito y guía de cerca, de puño de domador, la cuádriga encabritada, sus versos van galopando, y como engullendo la tierra a cada movimiento; unas veces relinchan ganosos, como cargados sementales; otras, espumantes y blancos, ponen el casco sobre las nubes; otras se hunden, osados y negros, en lo interior de la tierra y se oye por largo tiempo el ruido. Esboza; pero dijérase que con fuego. En cinco líneas agrupa, como un haz de huesos recién roídos, todos los horrores de la guerra. Un adverbio le basta para dilatar o recoger la frase, y un adjetivo para sublimarla. Su método ha de ser grande, puesto que su efecto lo es; pero pudiera creerse que procede sin método alguno; sobre todo en el uso de las palabras, que mezcla con nunca visto atrevimiento, poniendo las augustas y casi divinas al lado de las que pasan por menos apropiadas y decentes. Ciertos cuadros no los pinta con epítetos, que en él son siempre vivaces y profundos, sino por sonidos, que compone y desvanece con destreza cabal, sosteniendo así con el turno de los procedimientos el interés que la monotonía de un modo exclusivo pondría en riesgo.

Por repeticiones atrae la melancolía, como los salvajes. Su censura, inesperada y cabalgante, cambia sin cesar, y sin conformidad a regla alguna, aunque se percibe un orden sabio en sus evoluciones, paradas y quiebros. Acumular le parece el mejor modo de describir, y su raciocinio no toma jamás las formas pedestres del argumento ni las altisonantes de la oratoria, sino el misterio de la insinuación, el fervor de La certidumbre y el giro ígneo de la profecía. A cada paso se hallan en su libro estas palabras nuestras: *vida, camarada, libertad, americanos*. Pero ¿qué pinta mejor su carácter que las voces francesas que, con arrobo perceptible y como para dilatar su significación, incrusta en sus versos?: *ami, exalté, accoucheur, nonchalant, ensemble; ensemble*, sobre todo, le seduce, porque él ve el cielo de la vida de los pueblos, y de los mundos. Al italiano ha tomado una palabra: ¡*bravura!*

Así, celebrando el músculo y el arrojo (*daring*) invitando a los transeúntes a que pongan en él, sin miedo, su mano al pasas; oyendo, con las palmas abiertas al aire, el canto de las cosas; sorprendiendo y proclamando con deleite fecundidades gigantescas; recogiendo en versículos épicos las semillas, las batallas y los robles; señalando a los tiempos pasmados (*dumbfounded*) las colmenas radiantes de hombres que por los valles y cumbres americanos se extienden y rozan con sus alas de abeja la fimbria de la vigilante libertad; pastoreando los siglos amigos hacia el remanso de la calma eterna, aguarda Walt Whitman, mientras sus amigos le sirven en manteles campestres la primera pesca de la primavera rociada con champaña, la hora feliz en que lo material sea aparte de él, después de haber revelado al mundo un hombre veraz, sonoro y amoroso, y en que, abandonado a los aires purificadores, germine y arome en sus ondas, «¡desembarazado, triunfante, muerto!».

## Appendix 9

Rubén Darío [1867-1916]

“Walt Whitman” / *Azul*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition / 1890

### *WALT WHITMAN*

En su país de hierro vive el gran viejo,  
bello como un patriarca, sereno y santo.  
Tiene en la arruga olímpica de su entrecejo  
algo que impera y vence con noble encanto.

Su alma del infinito parece espejo;  
son sus cansados hombros dignos del manto;  
y con arpa labrada de un roble añejo  
como un profeta nuevo canta su canto.

Sacerdote, que alienta soplo divino,  
anuncia en el futuro, tiempo mejor.  
Dice al águila: « ¡Vuela!; ¡Boga! », al marino,

y « ¡Trabajo!», al robusto trabajador.  
¡Así va ese poeta por su camino  
con su soberbio rostro de emperador!

## Appendix 10

Joan Pérez Jorba [1878-1928]

"Walt Whitman" / Catalònia / February 10, 1900



Llegint els poemes d'en Whitman, un queda corprès i desconcertat davant de la seva ànima. En el ritme estrelladiç i perllongat dels seus versos, en la melodia novella dels seus cants, un sent bategar amb energia l cor d'un esperit immesurable i paradoxal.

En Whitman, actualment difunt, és fill de l'antiga capital de l'estat de Nova-York, Manhattan, on sembla que va néixer pels voltants de l'any 1819. Deu fer cosa de set anys, segons tinc entès, que va morir.

Pels seus versos, més que pel retrat, en Whitman produeix l'il·lusió d'una figura atlètica, d'una ànima gegant que, am tot i això, experimenta les debilitats dels homes de naturalesa inferior; i aquest decadentisme el posa de relleu en molts dels seus cants impetuosos.

La seva ànima, en els seus versos, se revela amb una sinceritat feréstega i amb una espontaneïtat corprenedora. El seu temperament expansiu i apassionat resum la part robusta de la seva naturalesa, que deixa sentir en les estrofes, com aquell qui diu, el brogit que fa la seva sang al córrer per les seves venes calentes. «Tu, rica sang meva», diu.

Esperitual i carnal a la vegada, selvatge i cultivat a l'ensem, en Whitman mostra l seu esperit en pensaments energics, en emocions rudes i en observacions subtils. El seu cor palpita quasi sempre cedint al fort impuls de lo èpic; i l'èpic d'ell és homèric i alhora decadentista.

Soc el mestre dels atletes.

Aquell que al meu costat desplega un cor mes ample que'l meu, prova l'amplaria del meu.

El qui més honra l meu estil és aquell que sota d'ell aprèn a destruir an el mestre.

Am tot, la seva emoció, encara que no s manifesta quasi mai eternidora ni esvanidora, se tradueix sovint en una follia exaltada que s barreja en un sentimentalisme atenuat; lo que li fa cantar, en un moment de tensió de cós i d'esperit: *Una hora a la follia i a l'alegria (One hour to madness and joy)*. Ordinàriament, les seves exaltacions són intel·lectuals i sensuals; plavent molt a la seva naturalesa aquesta situació de sensibilitat. I l'il·lumina a tot hora un resplendor viu de pensament, tenint l'energia derrocadora i arrebassadora del pensar.

\*\*\*

Literàriament, en Whitman és un poeta incoherent i impressionista. La seva incoherència en la poetisació apar talment consentida i quasi voluntària; i això prové, en el fons, de l'íntim anhel de que les idees i les imatges surtin de l'esperit concebudes amb espontanitat i lluminoses. Perxó ls seus cants resulten verament impressionistes d'idea i de sensació.

En Whitman és un poeta per essència. Si un oeix atentament la musica interior, deixant de banda la sonoritat i gaire bé l significat de les paraules, se pot sentir clarament en la poesia den Whitman com canta d'una manera melodiosa l seu esperit corprès i alhora després. El poeta és aquell que se sent cantar per dins: aquell que s'escolta veus interiorment commoses, lliures i espontànies, que li aixequen el cor invenciblement fins a les altures, fins a l'infinit; aquell que, oferint la seva ànima, canta sempre am naturalitat. La poesia, doncs, ve a esser la melodia sentimental i ideal en que s resol l'humanitat i la natura.

I en Whitman se mostra sovint com un visionari del món, o realitat externa, i de l'esperit, o realitat subjectiva. Els seus poemes són immenses visions de l'humanitat i de l'Univers.

I les nostres visions, les visions dels poetes: els anunciaments més sòlids que s'han vist,

diu. La seva vidència és quasi èpica aleshores. I la seva incoherència, convertida ja en el més pur impressionisme, li dona un caràcter formal d'innovador o de precursor de l'art contemporani, posant de manifest el seu atreviment poètic.

Guaiteu: barques barquejunt a través dels meus poemes.

En els últims cants, com si en ell l'ànima devingués infant i s'enternís, l'incoherència i barboteig poètics s'adunen a l'inefabilitat del sentiment humà; tot allunyant-lo, graciosament, de la primitiva rudesia emocional.

Clara i dolça és la meva ànima, i dolç i clar és tot lo que no és la meva ànima.

I aquesta incoherència mental, fosa dintre de l'emoció, té certa consemblança am la *sensibilitat filosòfica* den Nietzsche.

I tornant-se vell, en comptes d'entregar-se a un misticisme senil, en Whitman entra am l'esperit obert en una situació d'idealitat i de realitat metafísiques, la seva imaginació s'ensomnia dintre d'un panteisme simbòlic.

\*\*\*

«*Leaves of Grass*» (*Brins d'herba*), la seva obra única, conté una munió de poemes recollits i publicats de l'any 1855 fins l'any 1891, sota diversos títols. Del 1892 ençà, s'hi han inclòs algunes composicions postumes, que van afegides a les pàgines darreres del volum.

L'unitat dels *Brins d'herba* s'ha de trobar en l'expressió diversa de la seva ànima, la qual se manifesta dintre l conjunt dels seus cants, en un parentiu final d'idees i de sentiments que, en mig de les proporcions inexactes dels versos sembla talment oferir l'harmonia de lo paradoxal.

Desde l començar, en Whitman se va mostrar en la seva obra com un fervent anti-retoric. Els seus poemes se poden considerar com una musica selvatge i alhora novella. Ell va cantant, am boca oberta, forts i melodiosos cants. Les seves estrofes tenen de vegades el ritme grave i estrident del timbal. I és que l seu, de ritme, es mou amb una llibertat tant completa que s pot dir que gaire bé no cadença: és un ritme *que va caient*. Pera ell no vol en Whitman trabes de cap

mena: el deixa que s desenrotlli indomit, lliure, espontani i natural. I així ls seus poemes resulten escrits am versos lliures que segueixen el lliure impuls del cor.

El ritme desfet o irregular de ses estrofes, adunant-se a l'absència constant de la rima (am tot i algunes isolades consonàncies i assonàncies, que brollen per atzar i que l'autor respecta), és lo que atança marcadament la poesia de l'autor dels *Brins d'herba* a la musica revolucionaria den Wagner, donant a les seves composicions un aire paregut al que exhibeix la *melodia infinita*. En conseqüència, els versos den Whitman es poden considerar com a veritables simfonies poètiques.

El seu estil té molt de sensitiu i d'impressionista. Valent-se d'ell, en Whitman extreu poesia dels fets i detalls més corrents de la vida ordinària, tot barrejant-hi sovint conceptes elevadament filosòfics; puix ell és un poeta més aviat cerebral que sentimental. Emperò, a partir de los estrofes guerrereres dels *Drum-taps (Cops de timbal)*, el veiem commoure's ja més fonament i pura.

\*\*\*

Convé ara que analisi la disposició moral del seu esperit am si mateix i am l'humanitat que l volta.

L'autor dels *Brins d'herba* resulta un individualista exaltat i alhora superb. «Conec que sóc august.—Soc diví per dins i per fóra; santifico lo que toco». I, elevant-se *individually* a la regió etèria de lo divina!, pensa que devindrà immortal: «Lo sobre-natural no m'interessa —diu —perquè jo mateix espero devenir un dels suprems». Però tot seguit afegeix: «Us penseu que vui sorprendre?—Que sorprén potser la llum del dia? — Haig de sorprendre, doncs, jo més que ella?»

Entenent que l'individu no s'ha de sacrificar ni d'anul·lar completament en ares de l'humanitat, ell desitja infondre en la gent un sentit individualista, pera lo qual diu i canta: «Jo expandiré l'egotisme; jo seré l poeta de la personalitat». En l'exaltació i en l' enamorament del *jo*, com s'ha vist ara mateix, de vegades ell creu ésser veritablement un déu humà. En la composició *Song of myself (Cant de mi mateix)*, en Whitman poetisa i simbolisa la seva propria personalitat; oferint, d'una manera sintètica i detallada alhora, la seva identitat física i anímica. Per l'impressió que causa, aqueix poema llarguissim i curiosissim resulta, i no és pas hiperbolic, colossal i a l'ensemps paradoxal. L'individualisme hi agafa proporcions èpiques. En, Whitman, com se transllueix més endavant, ansia projectar el seu individu per sobre de l'humanitat; i això, com el seu amor an aquesta, apar fervent i irresistible.

L'individualisme i el particularisme den Whitman enclouen la crisalida que s transforma en humanitarisme i universalisme, com se veurà. «Aquell que m'accepti serà benehit i em benehirà». Seguint, doncs, el desenrotllament natural d'aquesta idea, el seu egotisme converteix en altruisme, tot agafant, am sentit quasi metafísic, el lema d'Humanitat i de Natura.

És un fet axiomàtic en sociologia que cada individu forma part integrant de la societat, i que, per tant, no pot separar-se o deseixir-se d'ella completament. I és un fet moral també reconegut que 1 sentiment de pietat obeeix en el fons a un refinament involuntari d'egoisme. Si un se commou davant del sofriment dels altres, és perquè l'ànima individual, reflexe del món extern, sofreix instintivament

quan ho expecta, i reaccionant, pera alleugerir-se a sí mateixa, li ve tot seguit un moviment irresistible de compassió, que s tradueix, psicològicament, per l'anhel de deslliurança a favor del pròxim. «Jo no pregunto pas a l'ànima ferida lo que pateix, sinó que jo mateix devinc l'ànima ferida». Com a conseqüència lògica d'això, en Whitman manifesta: «En tota la gent veig a mi mateix. — I lo bò i lo dolent que dic d'ella ho dic de mí mateix» I en un instant de generós i de grandíós des-prendiment (no d'abnegació que s'anul·la) exclama: «Jo no dono lectures ni una petita almoïna: quan dono em dono jo mateix». Ell sent una Imperiosa necessitat de combregar am l'humanitat, am la gent, perquè 1 seu ample cor hi troba 1 caliu del benestar i de la simpatia: «Hi ha quelcom en l'estada aprop dels homes i les dones, tot contemplant-los i en contacte amb ells i sentint el llur olor, que plau a l'anima tantíssim.»

Desde aquell moment d'ambició i presumtuós individualisme, que li fa cantar «absorbint-ho tot pera mi i pera aquest cant», en Whitman entra a inspeccionar i vol acaparar en sí tot l'univers. I aleshores se converteix en l'home que reflexa en el seu interior tot el món que 1 volta, en una forma d'egotisme universalista. Els seus versos representen el mirall poètic de l'aspecte extern de les coses, que, per lo dit, floreixen a través de la seva interioritat individual. L'impressió del formigueig de les multituds humanes i de la variació en l'harmonia de la naturalesa ve idealment a ensenyorir-se, tot commovent-la, de la seva gegantina individualitat. Perxó ell declara: «Soc immens: continc multituds». I partint d'aquesta universalisació personal, en Whitman vol convertir-se en un home que visqui totes les manifestacions de la vida humana. D'aquí que ell sigui patriota i cosmopolita a la vegada, interessant-se per la vida moral i material dels pobles, com per l'engrandiment i prosperitat de la seva terra. Mentalment, ell és un hegelian



dels que creuen que per la diferenciació se pot assolir amb efectivitat l'integració. Mes que contradir-se, sembla que al·lanci de debò la síntesi dels aparents contraris.

El seu humanitarisme és, en el fons, més afirmatiu que la pietat renunciativa, que l cristianisme, ja que aquell prové d'una terrenal exaltació de l'individu, el qual ve a mantenir, vivent i fervent, l'instint de solidaritat amb el pròxim, tot i entregant-se amb el pensament i amb el cor a una harmonia plàcevola amb la Naturalesa.

\*\*\*

Cal veure, ara, an en Whitman en una fase paradoxal del seu humanitarisme. Com a medi d'obtenir l'ideal de redempció, ell arriba a cantar i fins a acceptar la guerra en els *Cops de timbal*. En la guerra, primerament, remarca amb gran vidència l'antitesi de la pau afemelladora, duent, amb l'intranquil·litat, una gran tensió pera el còs i pera l'esperit. En la guerra, segons ell, se desenrotllen les energies físiques i els instints de lluita. «En temps de pau vareig cantar la pau. — Guerra avui, guerra vermella avui és el meu cant a través dels carrers, oh ciutat!» I els *Cops de timbal* representen lo més artístic i característic den Whitman: són quadros i visions dels diversos i menys tractats incidents de la guerra, plens de color i alhora d'emoció.

Així com ell preconisa la guerra per un fi de justícia humanitària, el seu egotisme universal el porta a exaltar en els seus poemes la solidaritat de races. Per altra banda, en Whitman és un poeta individualista que entona odes al Companyerisme i a la Democràcia. Aquest és el seu més fervent i més constant ideal humà. «Qui millor que jo comprèn als aimadors am tota llur tristesa i tota llur alegria? I qui millor que jo pot ésser el poeta dels Companys?—Jo dono la senyal de Democràcia. —Soc el Company del poble». En aquests cants us produeix l'efecte d'un apòstol amorós. El sentiment de la fraternitat és sempre viu, encès, en oli. «Per tots els que pateixen, sento o soc».

L'autor dels *Brins d'herba* creu que la regeneració i l'emancipació de l'Humanitat han d'obtenirse mitjançant l'amor i el companyerisme, mitjançant l'afecció i el liberalisme. En conseqüència, segons ell, l'afecció té de resoldre ls problemes de la llibertat. «Perfuma, doncs, el meu cant, oh Amor, immortal Amor!... Tot ho hem rebutjat menys la llibertat i la nostra propria alegria». Per ell els poetes s'han de proposar, a més de l'art, un fi d'humanitat, do justícia i de deslliurança. «Per la gran idea: aquesta, germans, aquesta és la missió dels poetes». Puix els poetes o artistes que no tenen facultat de pensament són ben poca cosa.

Filosòficament, en Whitman és materialista i esperitualista a la vegada. Sel pot considerar com un partidari convençut del monisme. Canta la salut i la robustesa; canta l'ànima i l'idealisme. Sublima l còs, la carn i la matèria; dóna forma concreta a l'ideal i materialisa l'ànima, tot creient en ella. «Crec en la carn i en els desitjós: veure, oir, sentir, són miracles; cada part o cada troç de mí és un miracle... El còs de l'home és sagrat, i el còs de la dóna és sagrat». I, després, en altre lloc afirma «que totes les coses, sense excepció, tenen una ànima eterna. — Sí: aquí ve la meva mestressa, l'Anima».

Fugint de la maldat i de la crudeltat, ell se mostra generalment com el poeta de la bondat i de l'afecte, am tot i que, segons he dit més amunt, sembla realisar èticament l'harmonia o la fusió de lo més antitètic. «Jo he cantat el còs i l'ànima; la pau i la guerra jo he cantat, i els cants de la Vida i de la Mort, i els cants de la Naixença; i he mostrat que hi han molts natalicis. A tothom he ofert el meu estil.»

Esquitllant-se contínuament de tot misticisme de renunciació, la seva ànima s'enlaira vers la regió absoluta de lo metafísic. Així l seu individualisme universal acaba a l'ultim per pendre un caràcter metafísic. «Cap a mí, convergint, les coses de l'univers perpetuament flueixen; Totes són escrites en mí i tinc de lograr les escrites significacions... Tempestes, aigües, vents, òperes i cants, marxes i dances: entoneu, vesseu, que jo us voldria tots acaparar dintre meu!... La joia de la meva ànima rebent identitat a través de la matèria, i estimant-la, i observant caràcters i absorbint-los.»

Darrerament, en Whitman, gran aimador de la Vida i gran preuador de la Mort (i perxò ell és completament harmònic) acaba per entrar en una mena de panteisme filosòfic, epic i grandió. I ell aleshores canta l'harmonia del seu esser am la Vida i la Naturalesa. «Oh Terra, voldria dir an els homes lo que m'agrada, més no puc». I el seu panteisme metafísic se desponcella a l'estil del naturisme humà: «Ara veig el secret de la formació de les persones més esplèndides: creixer en l'aire lliure i menjar i dormir am la Terra... Jo, impertorbable, en harmonia am la Natura, mestressa de tot; en mig de les coses irracionals, imbuit com elles, passiu, receptiu, silenciós com elles». La demostració del seu panteisme la teniu en les estrofes següents: «Ni la lògica ni els sermons convencen mai.—L'humitat de la nit penetra més profundament en l'ànima, — (sols lo que per sí mateix se demostra en cada home o en cada dóna és aixó,—lo que ningú nega és això)... Dic que la terra i les estrelles són en sufragi de la religió.»

I la seva ànima, atenent-nos als seus versos, s'extasia am freqüència en una contemplació il·luminada d'aquest món: «Que curiós! que real!—A sota, la divina terra; a sobre, el sol... El món és un somni... És una professo am mesurat i perfecte moviment». I, per aquest camí, ell arriba a alcançar una serenitat purament metafísica. I, prenent-ne consciència, ell aleshores enraona així a l'humanitat: «Jo dic a tot home i dòna: manteniu tranquil·la i freda la vostra ànima davant d'un milió d'universos.»

Respecte a la Voluntat Suprema, a la Raó Inconeguda, en Whitman expressa:

I jo dic a l'humanitat: no t preocupis de Déu.,

Perquè jo, que m preocupo de tota cosa, no sento pas curiositat vers Déu.

(No hi han paraules pera exprimer lo molt en pau que estic respecte a Déu i a la Mort.)

Sento i veig a Déu en cada objecte, però en el fons no comprenc a Déu,

Ni comprenc que hi pugua haver res més meravellós que jo mateix...

En les cares dels homes i de les dones veig a Déu.

En Whitman, en metafísica, ha pretingut resoldre 1 dubte terrible de les apariències». Més ell pregunta: «I què és raó? I què és amor? I què és vida?» Am tot, els seus cants semblen palpar sovint el misteri insondable de les coses. Aixó, adunat a un sentiment de lo absolut etern, i de lo tràgic quotidià, dóna a les seves mateixes descripcions i *enumeracions* certa grandesa metafísica.

Com un monista il·luminat, o visionari de l'harmonia, diu que no veu «cap imperfecció en l'univers». I té la visió d'una nova humanitat perfecta; «Ara, si estessin per comparèixer mil homes perfectes, no m sorprendria,— Ara, si apareguessin mil belles formes de dòna, no m'estranyaria».

En Whitman, per lo que s transllueix en les seves poesies, no ha experimentat mai l'engunia paorosa del temps o de lo transitori. Ha cregut en l'eternitat de lo temporal. El moment, com diu en Goethe, és el símbol de l'eternitat. I el poeta dels *Cops de timbal* expressa: «Jo accepto absolutament el temps». I en una poesia diu:

He sentit lo que ls enraonadors enraonaven: l'enraonament del començament i de la fi;

Però jo no enraono del començament ni de la fi.

Mai hi ha haguí més incipència que la d'ara,  
Ni més juvenesa, ni més vellesa que la d'ara,  
Ni mai hi haurà més perfecció que la d'ara,  
Ni més cel ni més infern que ls que hi han ara,

I més que ls que n pateixen l'horror, en Whitman té i ns produeix, enraonant-ne, l'impressió moral del Temps. «I jo m ric de lo que anomeneu dissolució... i conec l'amplitud del temps... Cada hora és el semen de centúries i centúries». El pànic del Temps i de la Finalitat, en Whitman el resol am l'idea de la constant reproducció dels sers. Per aixó, i per lo dit abans, ell és un poeta d'eternitat i d'humanitat alhora. La seva alta consideració del Temps li produeix devegades una visió homèrica del Passat, li suscita a estones una visió enterbolida del Pervindre. Hi han moments que per aixó sembla l vident dels sigles. «Deu-me la visió de lo futur,—Deu-me d'un cop la seva profecia i la seva alegria».

Els cants que n Whitman dedica a la Mort, a l'ultim del seu llibre, són els commosos i potents que ha entonat. Causen un sentiment religiós de la seva Idea, donant an aquesta una significació liberatriu i a l'ensems dominatriu. Ella, per en Whitman, és la continuadora natural de la Vida. I la canta envait per una mena d'emoció simbólica, per un sentiment etern i humà, fatal i triomfal. I, en mig de la suggestió funerària, parla de la «gràcia inefable dels dies moribonds». I, encisat per l'idea d'Ella, de la Mort, diu: «Llenço am mi a dins lo Inconegut a tots el homes i dones que m segueixin.—El rellotge indica l moment?— Què és lo que indica l'eternitat?... Suposa algú que és feliç lo néixer? Jo m'atreveixo a declarar que és igualment feliç morir.. I en quant a tu, oh Vida, regonec que ets la desferra de moltes morts». Però lo més generós, lo inefable den Whitman se sent en les estrofes que ha composat a la memòria den Lincoln i dels soldats morts o vençuts.

Canto aquest cant de la meva ànima silenciosa en memòria de tots els soldats morts.  
Dolces són les galtes florides dels vivents—dolces les veus musicals cantant,  
Però dolços, ben dolços, són els morts amb els ulls silenciosos.

En tot lo den Whitman hi ha un gran sentit afirmatiu pera l'individu i pera l'humanitat. Els seus poemes enclouen una significació ideal i ètica, causant en l'esperit una impressió metafísica i alhora terrenal.

J. PÉREZ JORBA

10 Desembre 1898 (?)

## Appendix 11

Cebria Montoliu [

A list of the twenty-three poems Montoliu translated from Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*

1. Un Mateix Jo Canto (de l'aplec titulat *Inscripcions*)  
Song of Myself, from Incriptions
2. En els Vaixells Pel Mar (del mateix aplec d'abans)  
In Cabin'd Ships at Sea, from Incriptions
3. A les Terres Foranes (del mateix aplec d'abans)  
To Foreign Lands, from Incriptions
4. A un Historiador (del mateix aplec d'abans)  
To a Historian, from Incriptions
5. Idols (del mateix aplec d'abans)  
*Eidólons* en l'original, això es, « imatges », « formes », en el primitiu sentit grec de la paraula), from Incriptions
6. En Llegint el Llibre (del mateix aplec d'abans)  
When I Read the Book, from Incriptions
7. Jo Canto-I Cos Electric (de l'aplec titulat *Fills d'Adam*)  
I Sing the Body Electric, from Children of Adam
8. Una Dòna M'espera (del mateix aplec d'abans)  
A Woman Waits for Me, from Children of Adam
9. Flairos Herbei del Meu Cor (de l'aplec titulat *Calamus*)  
Scented Herbage of my Breast, from Calamus
10. Cant de la Via Lliure  
Song of the Open Road
11. Cant de la Estrel: Fragments  
Song of the Broad-Axe: Fragments
  - a. La Gran Ciutat (Paragrafs 4 i 5 del poema original)
  - b. El Butxí (Paragraf 8 del poema original)
  - c. La Dòna Forta (Paragraf 11 del poema original)
12. Cant de L'exposició (inspirat en l'Exposició internacional que en 1853 celebrà New-York al *Crystal Palace*)  
Song of the Exposition
13. Un Cant de la Rodant Terra  
A Song of the Rolling Earth
14. A Tu (de l'aplec titulat *Ocells de pas*)  
To You, from Birds of Passage
15. Llagrimes (de l'aplec titulat *Brossa marina*)  
Tears, from Sea-Drift
16. Ciutat de Naus (de l'aplec titulat Trucs de Tabal)

- City of Ships, from Drum-Taps
17. Doneu-me l'Esplendid Sol Silenciós ! (del mateix aplec precedent)  
Give me the Splendid, Silent Sun, from Drum-Taps
  18. Miracles (de l'aplec titulat *Rierons Autumnals* )  
Miracles, from Autumn Rivulets
  19. Què sóc jo al Cap D'avall? (del mateix aplec d'abans)  
What am I, After All?, from Autumn Rivulets
  20. Oh Viure Sempre, Sempre Morir (de l'aplec titulat *Murmuris de Mort Celestial*)  
O Living Always, Always Dying, from Whispers of Heavenly Death
  21. El Mistic Trompeter (de l'aplec titulat *De Mig-dia a la Nit estrellada*)  
The Mystic Trumpeter, from From Noon to Starry Night
  22. Tot es Veritat (del mateix aplec abans)  
All is Truth, from From Noon to Starry Night
  23. Per la Riba de l'ample Potomac (del mateix aplec abans)  
By Broad Potomac's Shore, from From Noon to Starry Night

## Appendix 12

Cebrià Montoliu, *Documentalista, Bibliografista*

Montoliu documented and thoroughly sourced his writings – from his articles in his or others' magazines, his translations, and his study on Whitman, *L'home i sa tasca*.

Here, a sample of this work, his bibliography to his article in La Lectura (August 19??) – which was one part of a two-part except from his 1913 study.

Walt Whitman, *Feuilles d' Herbé*. Traduction intégrale d'après rédition définitive par Léon Bazalgette, 2 vols. Paris, Mercure de France, 1909.

Con anterioridad se habían publicado, en forma de libro, las siguientes traducciones:

Walt Whitman, *Foglie di Erba*. Traducción italiana de Luigi Gamberale. Remo Sandrou, Milano, Palermo, Napoli, 1887.

Knoriz y Rolleston, *Grasshalme*. Selección alemana. Zurich, 1889.

Karl Federn, ídem id. Minden, 1904.

Scholerman, ídem id. Leipzig, 1904.

Johannes Schiaf, ídem id. Reclams Universal Bibliothek.

Esta corta serie viene a aumentarse actualmente con mi reciente traducción catalana (Walt Whitman, *Fulles d'Herba*. Selecció y traducció per C. Montoliu, L'Avenç. Barcelona, 1910).

En cuanto de las obras originales de Walt Whitman, ver aquí su lista compuesta de su único editor autorizado, la casa Small, Maynard & Co., Boston:

*Leaves of Grass* («Hojas de Hierba», incluyendo toda la obra poética de Whitman).— ün vol.

*Complete Prose Works* (Obras en prosa completas, ó sea el resto de sus publicaciones literarias).— Un vol.

« Calamus » (Cartas á su amigo Peter Doyie). — Un vol.

« Tho Wound Dresser » (Cartas de hospital durante la Guerra de Secesión).— Un vol.

Los dos primeros volúmenes contienen las obras de Whitman, tal como quedaron fijadas en la edición de 1892, revisada por el autor en su lecho de muerte, con la excepción de un corto número de adiciones postumas. Los dos volúmenes de cartas fueron editados por el Dr. R.Bucke.



Añádase que la traducción — dadas sus enormes dificultades, de que sólo el que la ha intentado puede tener idea, y salvas deficiencias secundarias — puede tenerse por excelente, aunque nunca como definitiva, no habiéndose regateado sacrificios á dicho objeto, incluso la colaboración de literatos americanos y amigos personales.

(1) Traducción de L. Gamberale, antes citada.

(2) Evoluzione delle forme ritmiche del Whitman. Rome e Frassati. Torino, 1898.

(3) Walt Whitman. Nuova Antologia, 16 Junio, 1908.

Entre los trabajos aparecidos en Francia hay que rendir homenaje al magnífico ensayo de Gabriel Sarracín, publicado por vez primera en 1888 y ahora incorporado en su notable obra *La Renaissance de la Poesie Anglaise*, París, Perrín, 1899.

En España es mi particular amigo D. J. Pérez Jorba, á quien con gusto aplaudo como autor de un primer notable trabajo aparecido hace algunos años en la revista *Catalonia* de Barcelona.

Appendix 13

Cebrià Montoliu: Death Certificate

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO, BUREAU OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
CERTIFICATE OF DEATH**

1 PLACE OF DEATH  
County of Bernalillo Registered No. 676  
School District of \_\_\_\_\_ or VILLAGE or TOWN of \_\_\_\_\_  
or City of Albuquerque No. St Joseph Sanatorium St. A Ward \_\_\_\_\_  
(If death occurred in hospital or institution, give the NAME instead of street and number)

2 FULL NAME Cipriano Montoliu  
(a) Residence No. St Joseph Sanatorium St. A Ward Topeka Kansas  
(If death occurred in hospital or institution, give street or town and district)  
LENGTH OF RESIDENCE in city or town where death occurred FOR YEAR 10 OF RESIDENCE give year or years and district  
New long in U. S. if of foreign birth? yes no dx

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS					MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH					
3 SEX <u>Male</u>	4 RACE <u>White</u>	5 Single, Married, Widowed, or Divorced (write the word) <u>Married</u>	6 If married, widowed, or divorced HUSBAND or (or) WIFE of <u>Lucia Blasian</u>		7 DATE OF DEATH Month <u>Aug</u> Day <u>23</u> Year <u>1923</u>	8 DATE OF BIRTH Month <u>11</u> Day <u>18</u> Year <u>46</u>	9 OCCUPATION OF DECEASED (A) Trade, occupation, or particular kind of work (B) GRADE, nature of industry, business, or establishment in which employed (if employee) <u>Teacher</u> 101 Name of employer <u>Washburn University</u>	12 DATE OF DEATH Month <u>Aug</u> Day <u>23</u> Year <u>1923</u>	13 DATE OF BIRTH Month <u>11</u> Day <u>18</u> Year <u>46</u>	14 PRIMARY DISEASE <u>Pneumia Acute</u>
8 OCCUPATION OF DECEASED (A) Trade, occupation, or particular kind of work (B) GRADE, nature of industry, business, or establishment in which employed (if employee) <u>Teacher</u> 101 Name of employer <u>Washburn University</u>					15 MEDICAL HISTORY 15a Where was disease solicited If not at place of death? <u>Topeka Kans</u> 15b An epidemic precede death? <u>No</u> Date of _____ 15c Was there an autopsy? <u>No</u> 15d What was confirmed diagnosis? (Signed) <u>Physician</u> Date <u>8-11</u> , 19 <u>23</u> (Address) <u>Albuquerque N.M.</u>					
9 MARRIAGE (city or town) <u>Barcelona</u> <u>Spain</u>					16 SIGNATURE OF DECEASED <u>Cipriano Montoliu</u>					
10 NAME OF FATHER <u>Alejo Montoliu</u>					17 PLACE OF BURIAL, CREMATION OR DATE OF BURIAL <u>Columbus</u> <u>8-15</u> , 19 <u>23</u>					
11 RESIDENCE OF FATHER (City or town) <u>Spain</u>					18 SIGNATURE OF REGISTRAR <u>H. H. ...</u>					
12 MARRIAGE PLACE OF MOTHER <u>Pilar Fogoros</u>					19 ADDRESS <u>Albuquerque</u>					
13 RESIDENCE OF MOTHER (City or town) <u>Spain</u>					20 SIGNATURE OF PHYSICIAN <u>Physician</u>					
14 SIGNATURE OF DECEASED <u>Cipriano Montoliu</u>					21 SIGNATURE OF REGISTRAR <u>H. H. ...</u>					
15 ADDRESS <u>Albuquerque</u>					22 SIGNATURE OF PHYSICIAN <u>Physician</u>					

MARRIAGE RESERVED FOR WITNESS

X. MARRIAGE FURTHER, WITH UNLAWFUL INTER-COURSE IN A PERNICIOUS MANNER, BEING MADE OF INTERMARRIAGE  
SHALL BE CONSIDERED SUPPLIED. AGE SHOULD BE EXACTLY INDICATED. PHYSICIAN SHOULD STATE CLINICAL  
DIAGNOSIS IN FULL, SO THAT IT MAY BE PROPERLY CLASSIFIED. EXACT STATEMENT OF OCCUPATION IS VERY  
IMPORTANT. See instructions on back of certificate.

## Appendix 14

Cebrià Montoliu, gravestone, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Source: findagrave.com

Birth: 1873  
Death: Aug. 10, 1923  
Albuquerque  
Bernalillo County  
New Mexico, USA

Cebrià de Montoliu was an ecological town-planner, who left Barcelona, Spain, in 1920 in self-exile, to help set up an experimental "organic" utopian settlement called Fairhope in Alabama.

A disciple of Patrick Geddes, the Scottish town-and-country-planner, and an admirer of John Ruskin, William Morris and Ebenezer Howard, he also translated Shakespeare plays into Catalan Spanish.

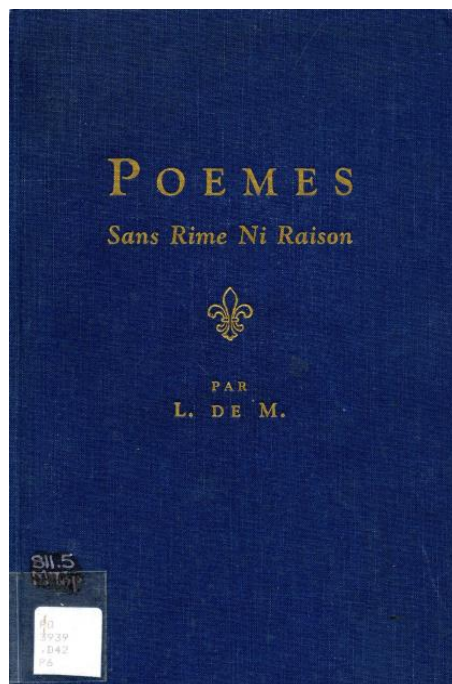
Burial:  
[Mount Calvary Cemetery](#)  
Albuquerque  
Bernalillo County  
New Mexico, USA



Appendix 15

Lucia Montoliu, née Blasian [?]

*Poèmes: Sans rime, ni raison*, by L. de M. (1942) in which figures the poem “A Cipriano”, which follows below.



*A Cipriano*

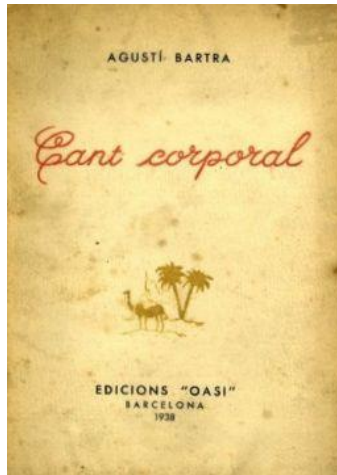
¡ Que bien se está contigo !  
Que descanso es al alma tan sabroso  
Dar en su hogar abrigo  
Y tener por amigo  
Al angel de mi vida cariñoso.

¡ Que bien se está contigo ! la morada  
Se encuentra caldeada  
Por esa luz divina  
Que destellas tu de la mirada,  
Que alienta, que acaricia, que ilumina.

Y al gozar del reposo  
Que en su reino Dios nos guarda amoroso  
Juntos iremos, dulce amigo.  
Seguirá nuestro canto delicioso  
¡ Siempre juntos ! que bien se está contigo.

## Appendix 16

Augustí Bartra [1908-1992]



*és un militante de la esperanza – Anna Murià*<sup>682</sup>

*Si la poesia detesta la definició, en canvi estima el símbol, el qual tendeix cap al mite, que és sempre la proclamació d'un valor revolucionari que fuig de les mandíbules de ferro de la lògica.*<sup>683</sup>

Augustí Bartra was a Catalan poet, novelist, translator and playwright, who, along with many of his peers, experienced concentration camps, in his case, Sant Cebrià, Argelers, and Agde, and went into exile during the Spanish Civil War. In 1940, with the writer Anna Murià, another writer he had met in a house of exiled artists outside of Paris, they settled, after passing through the Dominican Republic and Cuba, in Mexico. Here, Bartra worked with Pere Calders in a graphic art studio and where he and Murià founded and ran the literary magazine *Lletres* (1944-1947) and continued to write, and he, to translate.<sup>684</sup> According to D. Sam Abrams, it was in Agde where Bartra, translating poetry from English and French with his “inseparable” friend, Pere Vives i Clavé, made the commitment to one day produce a panorama of US poetry.<sup>685</sup>

---

<sup>682</sup>Esperanza Martínez Palau, “Augustí Barta en Mexico” (master’s thesis, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1989), 120.

<sup>683</sup>Fragment de “Poesia i mite”, discurs de cloenda d'Augustí Bartra al segon Col·loqui d'Estudis Catalans a Nord-americana, publicat a *Actes del Segon Col·loqui d'Estudis Catalans a Nord-Amèrica. Yale, 1979* (Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1982), 33-40.

<sup>684</sup>Xavier Gual, “Augustí Barta,” *L'Associació d'Escriptors en Llengua Catalana*, accessed March 7, 2017, [http://www.escriptors.cat/autors/bartraa/pagina.php?id\\_sec=1425](http://www.escriptors.cat/autors/bartraa/pagina.php?id_sec=1425).

<sup>685</sup>D. Sam Abrams, “Augustí Barta,” *Visat*, accessed March 7, 2017, <http://www.visat.cat/espai-traductors/cat/traductor/215/agusti-bartra.html>.



Bartra y Murià, Havana /escriptors.cat

In 1948-1950, then, Bartra received two successive Guggenheim Foundation grants for, according to his application, to work on an anthology of US poetry (which would become the *Antologia de la lírica nord-americana*, (Mèxic: Edicions Lletres novembre 1951).<sup>686</sup> but according to the Guggenheim Foundation, he had been awarded the grant to have the freedom to do “creative work in the field of poetry” and Mr. Moe, the Secretary-General of the Foundation repeated to Bartra once they met in person that he was under “no obligation to any predetermined project.”<sup>687</sup> The family spent those two years in Brooklyn, New Jersey and New York’s Long Island.<sup>688</sup> The couple returned to Mexico, making some other trips to the US, including for Bartra’s third Guggenheim grant, in 1961, as well as for his semester as Professor of Hispano-American poetry at the University of Maryland, in 1969.<sup>689</sup> Following that semester, the couple then decided, not without some trepidation, to return to Spain and Catalunya where they were, not surprisingly, greeted by open and enthusiastic arms by their compatriots. The couple continued their dual literary activities with great fervor until 1982, when Bartra died, having been awarded by that time several literary prizes as well as the Generalitat’s Creu de Sant Jordi (Saint George Cross).<sup>690</sup>

As Ricard Salvat sees it, just as Torres-Garcia was, in fact, a painter sharing affinities with both Noucentism and Avant-gardism, and thus, had to reinvent painting itself, Bartra, in his literary endeavours, reinvented his *languages* – both Catalan and the languages of the countries which welcomed him.<sup>691</sup> As Francesc Vallverdú terms it, if we can say that noucentism was an

---

<sup>686</sup> Other editions, 1952, 1957, 1959, 1974. Saltana.org. Accessed March 2017.

<sup>687</sup>Gironella, Cecília, *El Ojo de Polifemo: Visión de la obra de Augustí Bartra*, (Costa-Amic, Mex, 1957), 91.

<sup>688</sup> “Augustí Bartra”. Enciclopèdia.cat. Accessed December 2016. <http://enciclopedia.cat/search/site/bartra>

<sup>689</sup>D. Sam Abrams, “Augustí Barta,” *Visat*, accessed March 7, 2017, <http://www.visat.cat/espai-traductors/cat/traductor/215/agusti-bartra.html>. & Enciclopèdia.cat. Accessed December 2016.

<sup>690</sup>Xavier Gual, “Augustí Barta,” *L’Associació d’Escriptors en Llengua Catalana*, accessed March 7, 2017, [http://www.escriptors.cat/autors/bartraa/pagina.php?id\\_sec=1425](http://www.escriptors.cat/autors/bartraa/pagina.php?id_sec=1425).

<sup>691</sup> Salvat, Richard. *Obres completes IV: narrativa i teatre*. (Barcelona, Edicions 62, 1987). “...El fenomen Bartra en el camp de l’estètica és un fenomen paral·lel al de Joaquim Torres-Garcia, que es produeix a cavall entre Uruguai i Barcelona, excel·lent teòric de l’art, pintor del Noucentisme, però també de l’avantguardisme, que, en un moment determinat, també va sentir la necessitat de reinventar tota la pintura. Torres-Garcia i Bartra reinventen els seus llenguatges expressius tant per al seu país d’origen com per al país que els acull. La generositat de Bartra envers el

Apollonian-inspired movement, and that modernism, as “represented in the literary arts by Joan Maragall, a Dionysian-based movement, we find in Bartra an attempt to synthesize the rebellion of Dionysus with the aristocracy of Apollo.”<sup>692</sup>

In the end, what comes from studying Bartra’s life and work is not only his militancy of hope, but his *humanistic* militancy, or as D. Sam Abrams puts in much better form when writing of Bartra’s *Rapsòdia d’Ahab*: and how, in this work, Bartra goes beyond the egocentricity of the Renaissance and the Romantics to, “ens proposa un model d’home més respectuós, més conciliador, més reconciliador, més agraït, més emprenedor d’accions que beneficiaran la col·lectivitat, més humà, més conscient: l’home total. El que el poeta Bartra anomenava l’Home Auroral.”<sup>693</sup>

Bartra’s works generally considered the most outstanding are the novel *Crist de 200.000 braços* (*Christ of 200,000 Arms*, 1968), in which he describes the collective experience of the concentration camps, and his book of poems entitled *Ecce homo* (1968), which reflects his personal cosmology through the four elements: earth, fire, air and water.<sup>694</sup> His poetry has traditionally been compared with that of Walt Whitman, and as we will now see, rightly so, but, as he progressed in his work, he also followed on the heels of German poets such as Novalis, Hölderlin and Rilke.<sup>695</sup>

### Whitman and Beer

*Sense perdre mai la identitat catalana, Agustí Bartra va ser l’únic escriptor exiliat que va trencar barreres per incorporar-se a la cultura del país que el va acollir. Una prova més que Bartra creia, més enllà de totes les diferències, que tots els homes són el mateix home.*<sup>696</sup>

That last sentence, especially, sounds familiar...

---

gran país que li obrí les seves portes fa que li dediqui, en un gran acte d’amor, alguna de les seves millors aportacions per explicar-se’l a ell mateix, però, també, per explicar-lo a la mateixa gent de Mèxic [...]”.

<sup>692</sup>“Es podria deduir, també, de les coincidències estilístiques que hem assenyalat més amunt, que Bartra fos fill del noucentisme, i això encara seria més fals: ni les coincidències amb [Carner](#) (en el pla idiomàtic, en la tria de certs temes) ni les més sorprenents amb un postnoucentista com [Riba](#) (fascinat tots dos per Homer i per Grècia, seguidor Bartra dels ensenyaments ribians en mètrica clàssica) no justifiquen aquest parentiu. La filosofia "agonal" que proposa Bartra és ben lluny del classicisme lúdic i aristocràtic del Noucentisme: si en aquest hi havia un idealisme escèptic, una visió metafísica de la vida, en Bartra trobem un materialisme epicuri, una concepció existencial. Per al Noucentisme, fet i fet, la lluita era una Kulturkampf, mentre que per a Bartra la "lluita per la cultura" no es pot separar d’un compromís amb els homes del seu temps en el camí de llur alliberament. En resum, si el Noucentisme era apol·lini - en oposició al [modernisme](#) i a [Maragall](#), que eren prevalentment dionisiacs -, trobem en Bartra un intent de síntesi: la fidelitat simultània a l’aristocràticisme apol·lini i a la revolta dionisiaca.” [Francesc Vallverdú, "Introducció a la poesia d’Agustí Bartra", pròleg a Agustí Bartra, *Obra poètica completa I: 1938-1972*. (Barcelona, Edicions 62, 1971) quoted in “Agustí Barta,” *lletra: La literatura catalana*. Accessed March 7, 2017, <http://lletra.uoc.edu/ca/autor/agusti-bartra>.

<sup>693</sup>Sam Abrams, *La “Rapsòdia d’Ahab”: una divergència entre Melville i Bartra*, (1988) 30.

<sup>694</sup>Xavier Gual, “Agustí Barta,” *L’Associació d’Escriptors en Llengua Catalana*, accessed March 7, 2017, [http://www.escriptors.cat/autors/bartraa/pagina.php?id\\_sec=1425](http://www.escriptors.cat/autors/bartraa/pagina.php?id_sec=1425).

<sup>695</sup> Sam Abrams, *La “Rapsòdia d’Ahab”: una divergència entre Melville i Bartra*, (1988).

<sup>696</sup>Sam Abrams, “L’obra de Barta a l’exili mexicà,” *Diari de Barcelona* (Barcelona) June 1, 1990.



In the chronicle on their life together, *Crònica de la vida d'Agustí Bartra*, Anna Murià addresses more than once Bartra's affinity – from adolescence – with Whitman and his work: “Bartra venerava des de la seva joventut el poeta nord-americà...” and, “la primera epoca poetica de Bartra porta l'empremta de l'influencia de Whitman, be prou s'ha dit!”<sup>697</sup> It was, according to Murià, during their voyage in ship to Mexico that Bartra taught her, too, to love Whitman:

*(En) el bar, on estava una sala de joc i biblioteca. Cada dia hi passàvem bones estones, asseguts en una de les taules, amb una cervesa al davant, esclotant música, mirant els jugadors, llegint. Trèiem llibres de la biblioteca. N'hi havia un par nosaltres inoblidable: « Fulles d'herba », de Walt Whitman, en francès, en una bella edició en dos volums, amb un magníic retrat del poeta. El tinguèrem gairebé durant tot el viatge i el tornàrem, horas abans de desembarcar, amb una gran recança.*<sup>698</sup>

In her *L'obra de Bartra: assaig d'aproximació*, Murià discusses Bartra's “Els Himness,” and, includes the section therein subtitled: “Complanta d'Arnau des de l'Empire State Building: Lorca & Whitman” in which “l'allusió fa aparèixer el cos ensangonat del poeta andalús als braços de WW.”<sup>699</sup>

Bartra's “Veu en la nit”, the first poem in the collection *L'arbre de foc* is written, in the opinion of Llorenç Soldevila, in the “polymetric” style of Whitman. D. Sam Abrams addresses parallels between specific poems from the two authors. For example, “Hora alciòn” de Bartra, being a, “direct allusion to Walt Whitman who has a poem entitled “Halcyon Days”, from the 1888 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, when the poet was just short of celebrating his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday.”<sup>700</sup> In the poem, Whitman speaks to the losses of life as well as “contemplative and happy days” and Murià finds here both poetic and “vital”, as in “life” parallels between him and Bartra.<sup>701</sup>

Bartra himself, of course, also demonstrates the importance of this writer in his life: During his first stay in the US, Bartra made two pilgrimages to Walt Whitman's birthplace in Huntington. After his first visit there, he wrote “Gran Camarada del Nord” in his honor.<sup>702</sup> This poem would later be part of Bartra's *L'evangeli del Vent*.<sup>703</sup>

*Gran camarada de Nord...Gran camarada de Nord,  
dolç gegant de rosella i de boira que dorms, castic i adàmic,  
com una jove llegenda a la riba solar dels teus cants d'horitzons i banderes:  
dona'm la rosa de ferro del teu cor !*<sup>704</sup>

---

<sup>697</sup> Agustí Bartra, *Poeta Aurora, Pròleg i Propostes de Treball: Soldevila, Llorenç, Educaula, Col·lecció Les Eines*, (Barcelona, 2009), 30.

<sup>698</sup> Murià, Anna. *Crònica de la vida d'Agustí Bartra*, 1967.

<sup>699</sup> Murià, Anna. *L'obra de Bartra: assaig d'aproximació*, (Barcelona : Editorial Vosgos, S.A., 1975), 280.

<sup>700</sup> D Sam Abrams, *Haikus d'Arsinal*, (Barcelona: Editorial Andorra, 2010), 12.

<sup>701</sup> D Sam Abrams, *Haikus d'Arsinal*, (Barcelona: Editorial Andorra, 2010), 12.

<sup>702</sup> Murià, Anna. *Crònica de la vida d'Agustí Bartra, Vides i Memòries*, (Barcelona, Editorial Pòrtic, 1990), 26.

<sup>703</sup> Murià, Anna. *L'obra de Bartra: assaig d'aproximació*, (Barcelona, Editorial Vosgos, S.A, 1975), 211.

<sup>704</sup> Bartra, Agustí. *L'evangeli del vent*, (Mexico City: Biblioteca Catalana, 1956).

[http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/levangeli-del-vent--0/html/fff4254e-82b1-11df-acc7-002185ce6064\\_2.html](http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/levangeli-del-vent--0/html/fff4254e-82b1-11df-acc7-002185ce6064_2.html).

With all this in mind, it seems no small coincidence that Bartra's first collection of poetry, *Cant corporal*, as well as being a clear homage, if not a response or complementary text to, Joan Maragall and his *Cant spiritual*<sup>705</sup> also demonstrated Bartra's appreciation of the poet of "Song of Myself", of "I Sing the Body Electric" of "Whoever You are Holding Me Now in Hand", and that Bartra's first poetry collection, did not, at least in title, also take inspiration directly from Whitman. Moreover, as mentioned above, Murià herself confirms the influence, especially in the first part of his oeuvre. Additionally, Antoni Ribera, in his preface to the 2004 edition of Murià's *Crònica de la vida d'Agustí Bartra*, concurs – with a twist, that with some touches of surrealism.<sup>706</sup> Apart from the poems already mentioned, whose analysis is beyond the parameters of this thesis, Bartra also would go on to write "Oda Atlàntica", "Paumonak", and "Manhattan" during his first stay in the US.

Augustí Bartra's translation into Catalan of "Song of Myself" remained incomplete at his death and it was Miquel DescLOT, a great admirer of Bartra's, who brought it<sup>707</sup> to its conclusive form and had it published in 1985.<sup>708</sup> Thanks to the research of D. Sam Abrams, we know, too, from a letter from Bartra to DescLOTS (November 30, 1981) that Bartra had the intention of finalizing for publication this translation, which he had begun a decade before.<sup>709</sup>

Part of what I am proposing for future research is further exploration of circles of influence and, in this case, one containing Cebrià Montoliu and Augustí Bartra. Since it was DescLOTS who brought to publication Bartra's unfinished translation of "Song of Myself", how can we know,

---

<sup>705</sup>As was perhaps his *Oda a Catalunya des dels tròpics* (1942) to Maragall's *Oda Nova a Barcelona* (1909)

<sup>706</sup>Bartramuria. Accessed March 2017.

[http://www.bartramuria.cat/bartra/archivos/bibliografia/01082010\\_24105\\_Proleg\\_1967.pdf](http://www.bartramuria.cat/bartra/archivos/bibliografia/01082010_24105_Proleg_1967.pdf)

<sup>707</sup>Saltana/Walt Whitman, *Cant de mi mateix*, trad. Miquel DescLOT, (Vic: Eumo, 1985), accessed March 7, 2017

<http://www.saltana.org/2/tsr/54.htm#.WL6pNLGZPjE>.

<sup>708</sup>"Agustí Bartra pertany a un tipus de poeta que la nostra literatura no ha produït sinó amb una remarcable avarícia. Un tipus de poeta obertament romàntic, lligat per un vincle indefugible d'arrel ètica amb la humanitat adolorida a la qual pertany, i que Joan Fuster qualificà encertadament d'*humanista*, en el sentit més modern i menys acadèmic de la paraula. Bartra se sentia, sense histrionismes, germà de tots i cadascun dels homes: de l'home concret del seu temps. "Aquest home concret -ho saben tots els humanistes actuals- és un home que ha sofert, un home que sofreix, situat entre l'odi i la por, aquí, amb nosaltres i en nosaltres. Bartra es posa del seu costat; més encara: se sent, ell mateix, aquest home. N'accepta la condició nafrada, com fan els altres humanistes angoixats, amb els quals comparteix l'empenta tràgica" escrivia Fuster l'any 1955 en un intent especialment reeixit d'analitzar la manera de fer i de ser de Bartra. Per verificar l'encert d'aquestes paraules només caldrà retreure, per exemple, la següent confessió del mateix Bartra: "Abans de la guerra jo no existia com a poeta. Neixo amb la guerra, en una situació límit. Els meus primers poemes surten de la tragèdia que m'envolta i de la qual formo part." El poeta Agustí Bartra sorgeix amb la guerra perquè era un home nascut per al foc i no per al joc, o per dir-ho amb la terminologia que Fuster manlleva a André Rousseaux, era un home destinat a la literatura de la salvació més que no pas a la literatura de la benaurança." [Miquel DescLOT, "Introducció: Una guia de lectura", pròleg a Agustí Bartra, *Obra poètica completa II: 1972-1982*. (Barcelona: Edicions 62 (1983).]

<sup>709</sup>D. Sam Abrams, "Augustí Bartra," *Visat*, accessed March 7, 2017, <http://www.visat.cat/espai-traductors/cat/traductor/215/agusti-bartra.html>.

despite Desclots mentioning Montoliu in his preface to this work, that Bartra had read his translation? Bartra had been a life-long reader of Whitman – and then a writer and poet. He most assuredly had come into contact with Montoliu’s translation of Whitman’s poems, if not also his essay, either on his own or through his literary community sometime before leaving the country to go into exile.

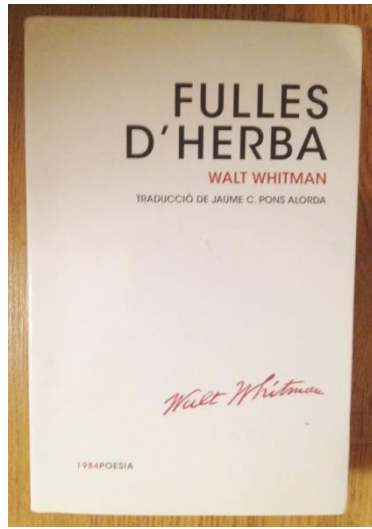


colnect.com



debildistraidoydespeinado.blogspot.com

## Appendix 17



I would like to add a word on the translations of Whitman into Catalan: as I was doing my research on, first and foremost, Montoliu, I kept wondering why, unlike among Hispanophones and Francophones, Whitman had not been translated – and re-translated – throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> c. by Catalan speakers. Some poems had been translated and published, but in what seemed to me rather limited amounts by Agustí Bartra, Miguel Desclots, Josep Costa, Lluís Roda and Sam D. Abrams. I found this surprising from both literary and social-political perspectives. Did this indicate a lack of interest in Whitman’s work on the part of Catalans? A bad impression of it from Montoliu’s translation? An idea that his work was not worth discovering and knowing? Untranslatable? A willingness (acceptance?) to read it in English or Spanish (or French, etc.)?

Then came 2014, or should I say 2010, for the four years the poet – not to mention determined and hardworking translator, [Jaume C. Pons Alorda](#), worked on *Leaves of Grass* and the complete translation of it into Catalan, published in April 2014 by 1984 Editions. In a conversation I had with Pons Alorda that very month, he did talk of previous efforts throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> c. at translating the complete *Leaves of Grass*, notably Bartra’s, of course.

In the end, it does seem like Whitman - or his translator - has found an audience in early 21<sup>st</sup> c. Catalunya. Was it always there, waiting? In any case, Catalans seem to think that, yes, in fact, Whitman is worth reading, and in their language. Three years on from its first edition, and much recognition for Pons Alorda along the way, booksellers still cannot keep it on the shelves, and it is thus, as of May, 2017, on the verge of its eighth edition – that is to say, it has thus far sold over 5,000 copies.

Perhaps that explains the two or three perfectly fine editions of *Leaves of Grass*, in Spanish, set with care next to recycling bins, I have come across these last couple of years...

Below, an interview with Jaume C Pons Alorda, Poet and Translator of first complete translation of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*.

Via email, March2017

**1. *Quan vas començar a la teva traducció? Quant de temps hi treballas? Vas ser abordat per la mateixa editorial que, al final, el va publicar? Si no és així, em podries dir de la ruta que va prendre per ser publicat?***

Vaig començar a traduir Walt Whitman a l'any 2010 i vaig estar treballant durant 4 anys. El projecte va néixer gràcies al poeta Enric Casasses, que sabia que Josep Cots, l'editor d'Edicions de 1984, feia temps que cercava algú que volgués traduir FULLES D'HERBA al català de forma completa. Enric em va dir que calia que trobéssim algú que fes la feina. Vaig dir que hi pensaria. Com més hi pensava més histèric estava: jo volia traduir Whitman però pensava que no estava capacitat, al mateix temps jo tenia por que Enric Casasses trobés algú altre. Una setmana després vaig trucar-lo per dir-li que ja havia trobat traductor. "Qui?" em va demanar ell. "Jo!" vaig respondre jo. "Ja sabia que t'enganxaria" va reblar ell en un últim moviment mestre. Em va presentar Josep Cots a l'Espai Mallorca antic, ja desaparegut, i allà vàrem quedar, vaig signar contracte i li vaig dir que en quatre anys tindria la feina feta. Vaig complir la meva paraula, cosa que ell no s'imaginava de cap de les maneres, com em confessaria anys després, perquè els mallorquins sempre l'havíem decebut. A partir d'aquí la història de la meva traducció de les FULLES D'HERBA de Walt Whitman és una història d'èxit: 7 edicions en català, unanimitat de passió entre crítica i públic, centenars de recitals per tot el territori de parla catalana, Menció Especial als Premis Ciutat de Barcelona, Premi Cavall Verd i Premi Serra d'Or.

**2. *Què tan familiaritzat estaves amb Whitman com a artista i com una "personalitat"? Estudia Whitman a l'escola primària, universitat aquí? La teva poesia és conscientment influenciat per ell? Durant la traducció, vas ser capaç d'escriure la teva pròpia poesia de la mateixa manera?***

Jo vaig descobrir Walt Whitman a partir de la pel·lícula EL CLUB DE LOS POETAS MUERTOS de Peter Weir i amb Robin Williams, un film que vaig veure quan tenia uns 12 o 13 anys més o menys perquè el cinema sempre m'ha agradat moltíssim. Em vaig comprar HOJAS DE HIERBA en castellà i el vaig llegir de ben jove. Després a la carrera de Filologia Anglesa, que vaig estudiar a la Universitat de les Illes Balears i a la University of Sheffield, vaig aprofundir en la seva vida i obra. Per tant quan Enric Casasses em va parlar de la proposta de Cots jo sabia perfectament qui era ell, i com a poeta m'entusiasmava, i és que els meus versos sempre havien intentat ser èpics, majestuosos, poderosos i immensos com els de Whitman, però també amarats de la foscor il·luminada de la generació dels anys setanta (Andreu Vidal, Àngel Terrón, Andreu Cloquell, Josep Albertí, Jaume Pont, Miquel de Palol, Lluís Urpinell...). La meva poesia és una fusió, entenc, entre l'èpica que va d'Homer a Ezra Pound i Derek Walcott, amb Whitman entremig, i l'experimentalisme textualista dels anys setanta de la tradició catalana. Durant la traducció vaig escriure molt poca poesia meva, alguns poemes, molt pocs, que després han format part de CALA FOC ALS OSSOS, publicat a Edicions Terrícola. Però certament em costava molt escriure la meva poesia mentre estava traduint. Sí que vaig poder escriure la meva novel·la FAULA (Premi Pare Colom de Narrativa, Leonard Muntaner Editor 2012) i passar a net el meu dietari APOCALIPSI UUUUUUAAAAAAAAA (Comanegra, 2015). Però la poesia de

Whitman era tan torrencial que jo em sentia incapaç d'encarar-me amb els meus propis versos. Després de traduir Whitman he escrit llibres molt diferents al meu to habitual, potser per fugir del seu estil, però veig que al final el meu to és hereu del seu i que acabaré escrivint sota el seu influx mestre. De fet ara vull escriure uns quants llibres waltwhitmanians, tant de poesia com de narrativa de cara a l'any 2019, bicentenari del geni nord-americà.

### ***3. Ja estavas familiaritzat amb la història Català d'ell la traducció?***

Abans de posar-me a traduir en català vaig seguir totes les traduccions fetes de Walt Whitman al català, amb Cebrià de Montoliu, Agustí Bartra, D. Sam Abrams i Lluís Roda al darrere.

### ***4. Què pensas de les anteriores traduccions?***

Les d'Abrams i Roda estaven bé però jo no m'hi identificava gaire, potser perquè tenim concepcions teòriques i pràctiques molt diferenciades. En canvi, les d'Agustí Bartra eren molt poderoses però faltaven molts poemes per traduir, les de Montoliu em varen semblar d'una modernitat i d'una intel·ligència espadidors. Vaig voler que el meu treball fos la meva visió però també un híbrid entre Montoliu i Bartra, que varen saber caçar molt bé el seu esperit.

### ***5. Podrias em dones algunes impressions d'ells? Una cosa que el vas sorprendre, tu decebut? Una cosa que has trobat excepcional?***

Whitman em sembla un autor absolutament brillant, capaç d'aconseguir una llibertat còsmica increïble, és un mestre etern i ho serà sempre perquè els seus versos ens marquen el camí de l'univers. Em va sorprendre moltíssim el fet que semblava que Whitman parlava de mi a cada vers i que em parlava directament, com si els seus poemes fossin cartes. M'ha sorprès que molta altra gent hagi experimentat el mateix. Una altra sorpresa: quan traduïa em sentia posseït per ell, en diàleg en ell. La meva dona em diu que durant els anys que vaig traduir-lo ella va viure amb dues persones que eren una: amb Whitman i amb mi. He arribat a experimentar una identificació plena, absoluta, sincera i apassionada amb ell, i crec que això ha contribuït a l'èxit de la meva traducció en el marc català actual. De Whitman res no em va decebre ni em decep. Al contrari, cada cop que torno a ell és per sorprendre'm una vegada més. I, de cara a la traducció, em va semblar molt útil fer un inventari amb les paraules més repetides, cosa que va fer que tot fos molt més fàcil i fluid.

### ***6. Què poemes vas preferir abans de començar la traducció? Van canviar a través de la teva traducció?***

Vaig començar pel principi i vaig acabar al final. Va ser una traducció cronològica que vaig revisar moltíssimes vegades sol però també amb el corrector Jordi Raventós, que va fer una feina exquisida.

### ***7. Què poemes plantejaves el desafiment més important per a tu?***

Crec que EL CANT DE MI MATEIX seria difícil, però al final crec que tot va ser molt fluid i les dificultats no varen ser tan grosses com m'imaginava.

**8. *Tu també llegir sobre la vida de Whitman; o en la vida dels traductors?***

Vaig estar tot un any documentant-me: biografies, textos, estudis, crítiques... Durant un any vaig entrar dins Walt Whitman i el seu món. Era necessari per fer una bona traducció.

**9. *Has llegit les assajos sobre Whitman de Montoliu o de Bazalgette?***

El de Montoliu sí, el de Bazalgette no.

**10. *Has continuat el teu treball com traductor? Està traduint més Whitman? La poesia, la prosa?***

He continuat traduint: llibres de Ramon Llull, Francis Scott Fitzgerald i Penelope Fitzgerald. I després treballaré amb D.H.Lawrence, William Wordsworth, Ezra Pound i William Blake. De Whitman sols vaig traduir uns quants poemes esparsos que varen publicar-se com a PÒSTER d'Edicions Poncianes (2014) i dins de la revista REDUCCIONS de Poesia. Algun dia vull traduir els diaris de guerra i les proses de Walt Whitman. Però ara sento que he de fer altres coses.