

THE NEW WALT WHITMAN STUDIES

This book highlights some of the latest currents in Whitman scholarship and demonstrates how Whitman's work can speak to and transform discussions in literary studies during a time of great intellectual ferment. It is organized into three sections addressing aesthetics and politics, new reading methods, and histories of the critical imagination. This volume contains innovative work on Whitman in a range of fields. With the explosion of digitization of books and periodicals in the past few years, the entire sense of Whitman's career is changing, and these essays are informed by the latest revelations among primary sources. *The New Walt Whitman Studies* shows how the latest concerns of literary analysis, from surface reading to ecocriticism to the digital humanities, emerged from an engagement with Whitman's work.

MATT COHEN is Professor in the Department of English at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. He works in the fields of early American literature, digital archives, and the history of the book. His essays have appeared in *PMLA*, *American Literary History*, *The Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and *Book History*, among others. He is the author or editor of five books, including most recently *Whitman's Drift: Imagining Literary Distribution* (2017).

TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY CRITICAL REVISIONS

This series addresses two main themes across a range of key authors, genres, and literary traditions. The first is the changing critical interpretations that have emerged since *c.* 2000. Radically new interpretations of writers, genres, and literary periods have emerged from the application of new critical approaches. Substantial scholarly shifts have occurred too, through the emergence of new editions, editions of letters, and competing biographical accounts. Books in this series collate and reflect this rich plurality of twenty-first-century literary critical energies, and wide varieties of revisionary scholarship, to summarize, analyze, and assess the impact of contemporary critical strategies. Designed to offer critical pathways and evaluations, and to establish new critical routes for research, this series collates and explains a dizzying array of criticism and scholarship in key areas of twenty-first-century literary studies.

Recent Titles in This Series

JEAN-MICHEL RABATÉ

The New Samuel Beckett Studies

MICHELLE KOHLER

The New Emily Dickinson Studies

JOANNA FREER

The New Pynchon Studies

VICTORIA AARONS

The New Jewish American Literary Studies

CODY MARRS

The New Melville Studies

THE NEW WALT WHITMAN STUDIES

EDITED BY
MATT COHEN
University of Nebraska–Lincoln



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-108-41906-2 — The New Walt Whitman Studies
 Edited by Matt Cohen
 Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
 UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
 314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
 New Delhi – 110025, India
 79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108419062

DOI: 10.1017/9781108296830

© Cambridge University Press 2020

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2020

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd., Padstow, Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

NAMES: Cohen, Matt, 1970– editor.

TITLE: The new Walt Whitman studies / edited by Matt Cohen, University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

DESCRIPTION: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2020. | Series: Twenty-first-century critical revisions

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2019021303 | ISBN 9781108419062

SUBJECTS: LCSH: Whitman, Walt, 1819–1892 – Criticism and interpretation.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC PS3238 .N47 2020 | DDC 811/.3–dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2019021303>

ISBN 978-1-108-41906-2 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>List of Contributors</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xiii
Introduction	I
<i>Matt Cohen</i>	
PART I THE NEW LIFE OF THE NEW FORMS: AESTHETICS, DISCIPLINES, POLITICS	15
1 Whitman’s “Deathbed” Radicalism and Its Modernist Effects	17
<i>Caterina Bernardini and Kenneth M. Price</i>	
2 Whitman, Women, and Privacy	33
<i>Justine S. Murison</i>	
3 The Poetics of a New Science: “Song of Myself” as Sociology	50
<i>Timothy Robbins</i>	
4 World Wide Walt: Making and Marketing Whitman’s Global Persona	68
<i>Thoren Opitz</i>	
5 Intimacies of Place: Walt Whitman and the Politics of Settler Sensation	83
<i>Mark Rifkin</i>	
PART II WET PAPER BETWEEN US: NEW READING METHODS	99
6 Whitman in Your Pocket: The History of the Book and the History of Sexuality	101
<i>Jay Grossman</i>	

vi	<i>Contents</i>	
7	“All Thy Wide Geographies”: Reading Whitman’s Epistolary Database <i>Alexander Ashland, Stefan Schöberlein, and Stephanie M. Blalock</i>	121
8	Haptic Feelings <i>Erica Fretwell</i>	144
9	Walt Whitman’s Leaves <i>Nicole Gray and Matt Cohen</i>	161
	PART III A KOSMOS: THE CRITICAL IMAGINATION	183
10	Critique Is Not That Old, Composition Is Not That New: Sadakichi Hartmann’s <i>Conversations with Walt Whitman</i> <i>Andrew Way Leong</i>	185
11	Reading Whitman in Disenchanted Times <i>Christopher Castiglia</i>	203
12	“Permit to Speak at Every Hazard”: Whitman’s Grammar of Risk <i>Peter Riley</i>	216
13	Whitman Getting Old <i>Ed Folsom</i>	232
	<i>Index</i>	248

Figures

6.1	<i>Walt Whitman's Poems</i> , front cover	page 104
6.2	<i>Walt Whitman's Poems</i> , back cover, showing the advertisement for the <i>Appeal to Reason</i>	108
6.3	Catalog for <i>The Ten Cent Pocket Series</i> , advertising No. 73, <i>Walt Whitman's Poems</i>	109
6.4	Advertisement for Sanger's <i>What Every Girl Should Know</i> facing the title page of <i>Walt Whitman's Poems</i>	110
6.5	Leo R. Burton's copy of Margaret Sanger's <i>What Every Girl Should Know</i>	111
7.1	Snapshot of interactive D3 visualization of correspondent locations	124
7.2	Force diagram via Google Fusion Tables of Whitman's Civil War epistolary network, 1860–66	126
7.3	Topic model of Whitman's two-way correspondence	128
7.4	Choropleth map via Tableau v.10.3 showing numerical increase in mentions of states from the 1860 to the 1867 editions of <i>Leaves of Grass</i>	132
7.5	Choropleth map via Tableau v.10.3 of all messages Whitman either sent or received between January 1860 and December 1873	133
7.6	Bar graph via Tableau v.10.3 depicting the number of letters, by correspondent location, in which Whitman mentions <i>Specimen Days</i>	136
7.7	Bar graph via Tableau v.10.3 depicting the number of national and international reviews of <i>Specimen Days</i>	136
7.8	Tree map via Tableau v.10.3 of Whitman's post-1860 correspondence	138
7.9	Heatmap via CARTO showing sender locations of Whitman's celebrity mail, 1888–92	140

viii	<i>List of Figures</i>	
7.10	Heatmap condensed and overlaid with the locations of Whitman's transatlantic circle of promoters	141
8.1	"The Physique of the Brain," collage and marginalia by Walt Whitman	153
8.2	Frontispiece of the 1855 <i>Leaves of Grass</i>	158
9.1	A trio of rose leaves in a copy sent to Whitman of <i>The Odes of Anacreon</i> , translated by Thomas Moore	166
9.2	Tulip tree leaves in Whitman's annotated copy of William Dunlap <i>History of the New Netherlands</i>	168
9.3	Birch-bark proof slip of Walt Whitman's "Twilight," with annotations by Whitman	175
9.4	Leaf traces – of bay laurel? – in Whitman's copy of William Dunlap's <i>History of the New Netherlands</i>	179
9.5	Whitman's copy of William Dunlap's <i>History of the New Netherlands</i> , as it appears at Archive.org	180
10.1	Decorative emblem on the final page of <i>Conversations with Walt Whitman</i>	199
12.1	Concluding lines of the poem later known as "Song of Myself," from the 1855 edition of <i>Leaves of Grass</i>	226

Contributors

ALEXANDER ASHLAND is a PhD candidate in English at the University of Iowa. His dissertation, *Documentary Emerging: US Literature in the Age of Compromise*, examines how mid-nineteenth-century writers negotiated literary and nonliterary media to respond to and shape changing conceptions of race, gender, and class. In addition to his research in media studies and the digital humanities, he is developing *Mapping Whitman's Correspondence* (or “Whitmap”), and exploring how this project can facilitate new digital pedagogies.

CATERINA BERNARDINI is a postdoctoral research associate at the Université Paris-Est Créteil Val de Marne, Paris. She received her joint PhD in Comparative Literature and English from the University of Macerata, Italy, and the University of Nebraska–Lincoln in 2017, where she taught and worked as an editorial assistant for The Walt Whitman Archive. Her book about the Italian and transnational reinvention of Whitman is forthcoming from the University of Iowa Press.

STEPHANIE M. BLALOCK is a Digital Humanities Librarian in the Digital Scholarship and Publishing Studio at the University of Iowa Libraries. She is an associate editor of The Walt Whitman Archive and the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*, an associate editor of *The Vault at Pfaff's*, and coeditor of a digital edition of Whitman's fiction for the Archive. She is the author of *Go to Pfaff's: The History of a Restaurant and Lager Beer Saloon* (2014), and her research focuses on Whitman's fiction.

CHRISTOPHER CASTIGLIA is Distinguished Professor of English at the Pennsylvania State University. He is the author of *Bound and Determined: Captivity, Culture-Crossing, and White Womanhood from Mary Rowlandson to Patty Hearst; Interior States: Institutional Consciousness and the Inner Life of Democracy in the Antebellum United*

List of Contributors

States; and *The Practices of Hope: Literary Criticism in Disenchanted Times*.

MATT COHEN is Professor of English and a Faculty Fellow at the Center for Digital Research in the Humanities at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. He is the author of *Whitman’s Drift: Imagining Literary Distribution*, a contributing editor at The Walt Whitman Archive, and a coeditor of The Charles Chesnutt Digital Archive.

ED FOLSOM, the Roy J. Carver Professor of English at the University of Iowa, is the editor of the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*, codirector of the online Whitman Archive, and editor of the Iowa Whitman Series at the University of Iowa Press. He is the author or editor of twelve books, and his work has been chosen four times as a *Choice* Outstanding Academic Title. His essays have appeared in numerous books and journals, including *American Literature*, *ALH*, *PMLA*, and the *Virginia Quarterly Review*.

ERICA FRETWELL is Assistant Professor of English at the University at Albany, State University of New York. Her essays have appeared in *American Literary History*, *J19*, and the edited volume, *Timelines of American Literature*. She recently edited a special issue of *Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities* on “Common Senses and Critical Sensibilities.” Her book *Sensory Experiments: Psychophysics and the Aesthetics of Feeling in Nineteenth-Century America* (Duke University Press) is forthcoming.

NICOLE GRAY is a Research Assistant Professor at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and a contributing editor to the digital editorial project The Walt Whitman Archive. She has published essays on nineteenth-century American literature and media in *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, *Scholarly Editing*, and *PMLA*.

JAY GROSSMAN teaches eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American literature and culture, the history of the book, and the history of sexuality at Northwestern University. He is the author of *Reconstituting the American Renaissance: Emerson, Whitman, and the Politics of Representation* (Duke University Press, 2003), and is at work on a cultural biography of the literary scholar and political activist F. O. Matthiessen.

ANDREW WAY LEONG is Assistant Professor of English at the University of California, Berkeley. He is the translator of *Lament in the Night* (Kaya

List of Contributors

xi

Press, 2012), a collection of two novels by Nagahara Shōson, a writer who published for a Japanese-reading audience in Los Angeles during the mid-1920s. He is completing a manuscript on the queer engagements of early Japanese students, sojourners, and immigrants with Euro-American poets and utopian visionaries.

JUSTINE S. MURISON is Associate Professor of English at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is the author of *The Politics of Anxiety in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), and her second book is on privacy and secularism in the long nineteenth century. She is also the volume editor for *American Literature in Transition: The Long Nineteenth Century*, vol. 2, 1820–1860 (under contract with Cambridge University Press) and a general editor for the new *Broadview Anthology of American Literature*.

THOREN OPITZ received his PhD in American Literature from Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich in 2018. His thesis compared the self-making of Whitman's global persona with those of contemporary American rappers, considering aspects of their respective masculinity, marketing, and global mobility. He teaches Kung Fu, Qi Gong, and Vipassana Meditation in Munich.

KENNETH M. PRICE, Hillegass University Professor at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, has codirected The Walt Whitman Archive since 1995. He is the author of *To Walt Whitman, America* (North Carolina, 2004) and coauthor with Ed Folsom of *Re-Scripting Walt Whitman* (Blackwell, 2005). His next book, *Whitman in Washington: Becoming the National Poet in the Federal City*, is forthcoming from Oxford University Press.

MARK RIFKIN is Professor of English and Women's and Gender Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He is the author of six books, including *Settler Common Sense: Queerness and Everyday Colonialism in the American Renaissance* and *When Did Indians Become Straight?: Kinship, the History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty*. He also has served as president of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association.

PETER RILEY is a Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Exeter. He is the author of *Against Vocation: Whitman, Melville, Crane, and the Labors of American Poetry* (Oxford University Press, 2019). He has published articles in the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* and

Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies, and contributed essays to *The Cambridge History of American Working-Class Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), and the forthcoming *Nineteenth-Century American Literature in Transition* (Cambridge University Press, 2020). He is currently serving as a committee member and caseworker for the Exeter Branch of the University and College Union (UCU).

TIMOTHY ROBBINS is Assistant Professor of English at Graceland University. His work has appeared in the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* and *Texas Studies in Language and Literature*, and he is the lead editor of the *Open Anthology of Early American Literature*. He is at work on a book titled *Walt Whitman and the Sociological Imagination*.

STEFAN SCHÖBERLEIN is Assistant Professor of English and the Digital Humanities at Marshall University. His scholarship related to Whitman has appeared in *American Literature*, *College Literature*, *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*, *South Central Review*, and the *Chicago Review*. His translation of Whitman's *Life and Adventures of Jack Engle* into German appeared in 2017 (Berlin: Das Kulturelle Gedächtnis).

Acknowledgments

The idea for this volume came from Ray Ryan, and I'm deeply grateful to him for trusting me with the project. Thank you also to all of the essayists, not merely for their insightful chapters but for the other contributions that they made to the direction of the book. In particular, I thank Jay Grossman (without whom I may never have understood the delights of Whitman study) for his extra efforts in helping me assemble the volume.

Caitlin Henry played a crucial role in bringing the manuscript into shape. I am thankful to her both for that sometimes tedious labor and for her copyediting suggestions. Micah Bateman also offered editorial help and reflective conversation during the project's early stages; Andrew Kerr-Jarrett copyedited the book with attentiveness and patience; and Catherine Smith and Raghavi Govindane were good production shepherds. Support both intellectual and bureaucratic from two department chairs, Marco Abel and Elizabeth Cullingford, made this project possible; and Edgar Mendez at Cambridge University Press was a helpful guide.

Certainly this book wouldn't exist without the wisdom and knowledge of Ken Price and Ed Folsom, who have been shepherds to me and so many others in the study of Walt Whitman. I would have been equally lost without the staff of The Walt Whitman Archive during the making of this book, and especially Brett Barney, Kevin McMullen, Caterina Bernardini, Regan Chasek, Alejandro Omidsalar, Ashley Palmer, Ashlyn Stewart, and Christy Hyman.

There are many folks to thank with whom I have talked about this project and the state of literary studies more broadly: Caleb Smith, Robert Nelson, Christopher Labarthe, Aubrey Plourde, John Miles, Lauren Coats, Britt Rusert, Leif Eckstrom, Hsuan Hsu, Cara Shipe, Lars Hinrichs, Phil Barrish, Heather Houser, Evan Carton, Virginia Jackson, Jonathan Beecher Field, Phil Round, Ezra Greenspan, Ed Whitley, Gordon Hutner, Chris Looby, Molly Hardy, Hannah Alpert-Abrams, Nick Courtwright, Meredith McGill, Michael Cohen, Carrie Hyde, Wendy

Acknowledgments

Katz, Melissa Homestead, Laura Mielke, and Michael Winship. Michael, in particular, has been generous with both his support of my work and trenchant caveats about historical perceptions of Whitman and his books.

My beloved grandmother, Marian Sherwood Weston, who passed away during the making of this volume, often asked me about Walt, and her model of curiosity and love I have tried to weave into my words. The rest of my family is intrigued by Whitman, but their patience with his presence in my life and conversation reflects something deeper, for which I am always grateful: Thank you, Julie and Fred Gray, and Katharine, Michael, and Daniel Cohen. Nikki and Roam, lovers of me, bafflers of graves, I thank you again and again.