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WALT WHITMAN'S POETIC-POLITICAL EXPERIMENT: JEFFERSONIAN WHITMAN AND WHITMAN'S OLFACTORY TROPES

Értekezés / Dissertation

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I, the undersigned Kiyotaka Sueyoshi hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. To the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted as part of the requirements of any other academic degree or non-degree program, in English or in any other language.

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ABSTRACT

The dissertation aims to explore two overlooked motifs in the criticism of Walt Whitman: the influence of Jefferson on Whitman and Whitman's olfactory tropes. The central hypothesis of the dissertation is that Whitman's poetic enterprise is to be studied within the framework of the American experiment of self-government. I propose that this hypothesis provides us with a framework to link Whitman and Jefferson as well as to better understand Whitman's olfactory tropes. In other words, just as the American Revolution is a theater of Jefferson's American experiment of self-government so is Leaves of Grass a theater of Whitman's American experiment of synthesizing three kinds of self-government – personal self-governing, self-government in poeticization, and political self-government. I propose that at the heart of this synthesis is Whitmanian pride – a motif of nearly all his verse –, invigorating pride to continue the American experiment. I propose to show that Whitman's olfactory tropes – the main elements of his "new decorums" - are the vehicle for such pride in his poems. Olfactory tropes represent pride via the "pride-respiration-olfaction scheme" and the notion of "odor experience peculiar to Whitman," both of which will be introduced in the dissertation. Whitman's adoption of olfaction as the medium for pride is all the more noteworthy because his so-doing occasions olfaction's shift from the periphery to the center among the five senses. I propose that conflating poetics and politics in this manner is Whitman's poetic-political experiment par excellence.

Since the politics and poetics of Whitman go hand in hand, my methodological framework lies in New Historicism, especially in what David Simpson calls "analytic" historicism. The dissertation prioritizes the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass* since it features two aspects of Whitman's poetics – the initial formation and the experimental nature of it. The dissertation aims to show that it is when viewed from the perspective of the American experiment that Whitman's choice of his medium, his choice of the subject matter, and his way of poeticization – including his employment of olfactory tropes – cohere.

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Introduction

1. Critical overview

This dissertation aims to explore two overlooked motifs in the criticism of Walt Whitman: the influence of Jefferson on Whitman and Whitman's olfactory tropes. The central hypothesis of this dissertation is that putting Whitman's poetic enterprise into the framework of the American experiment of self-government constitutes a basis for the examination of it. I propose that this hypothesis provides us with a framework to link Whitman and Jefferson¹ as well as to better understand Whitman's poetics – especially Whitman's olfactory tropes. In other words, just as the American Revolution is a theater of Jefferson's American experiment of self-government so is *Leaves of Grass* a theater of Whitman's American experiment of synthesizing three kinds of self-government – personal self-governing, self-government in poeticization, and political self-government. I propose that at the heart of this synthesis is Whitmanian pride – a *motif* of nearly all his verse² –, invigorating pride to continue the American experiment. Whitman's olfactory tropes – the main elements of his "new decorums" – are the vehicle for such pride in his poems.

There are various reasons for the disregard for the influence of Jefferson on Whitman and Whitman's olfactory tropes. As regards the influence of Jefferson on Whitman, first of all, Whitman is a canonical figure in the field of American Studies, and thus the criticism of his

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¹ In *The Jefferson image in the American mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), Merrill D. Peterson (9) states that "Everyman was his own Jeffersonian. This was due not only to the enigma of the man, but also to partisan memories and to some mysterious attraction that caused men in every generation to interpolate Jefferson in their living worlds." Among the various ideas on Jefferson, this dissertation centers around the identification of him with the American experiment of self-government as the author of *the Declaration of Independence*.

Walt Whitman, Leaves of Grass: Authoritative Texts Prefaces Whitman On His Art Criticism, eds. Sculley Bradley and Harold W. Blodgett (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1965), 571.

Walt Whitman, "Walt Whitman and His Poems," *The United States Review* vol. 5 (September 1855): 205-212. https://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/reviews/lg1855/anc.00176.html; Whitman states "He drops disguise and ceremony, and walks forth with the confidence and gayety of a child. For the old decorums of writing he substitutes new decorums." In the same self-review, Whitman repeatedly refers to the dichotomy between "the old decorums" and "new decorums." He states that "Every word that falls from his mouth shows silent disdain and defiance of *the old theories and forms*. Every phrase announces *new laws* [...];" and that "By this writer *the rules of polite circles are dismissed with scorn*. Your stale modesties, he says, are filthy to such a man as I." (emphasis mine)

works has been influenced by the trend of reading of canonical works, which has decoupled art from politics.⁴ Even if the criticism on Whitman's political view would be accepted, there is another obstacle to the incorporation of the influence of Jefferson into it; there is a widely held assumption that Lincoln is the president with whom Whitman is associated most,⁵ an assumption so strong that it precludes the possibility of looking backward further to the relation between Whitman and Jefferson.⁶ True, in the deathbed edition of *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman refers to Jefferson only once;⁷ Whitman's numerous references to Jefferson were made in his journalistic works before 1855, when Whitman had not fully established his poetic voice.

What makes things complicated is the critics' treatment of Whitman's writings before Leaves of Grass 1855. Here, two kinds of writings – his journalistic works and notebooks for the future Leaves of Grass – are in focus. The critics have read them only as what Emerson calls "a long foreground," and paid attention only to the part where they can find the connection between Walter Whitman and Walt Whitman. I problematize the critics' application of this kind of reading even to Whitman's journalistic works. I propose to call this

⁴ Betsy Erkkila, *Whitman the Political Poet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 7; John E. Seery, "Introduction: Democratic Vistas Today," in *A Political Companion To Walt Whitman*, ed. John E. Seery (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2011), 2. Seery states that "The extent to which one should read Whitman as a "political" poet at all is a matter of dispute in the literature."

⁵ Shira Wolosky, "Walt Whitman: the office of the poet" in *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, vol.4 Nineteenth-Century Poetry 1800–1910, ed. Sacvan Bercovitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 373.

There are two points to consider here. Firstly, Jefferson influenced both Whitman and Lincoln, who states that "The principles of Jefferson are the definitions and axioms of free society" (Abraham Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln Speeches And Writings 1859-1865: Speeches, Letters, and Miscellaneous Writings Presidential Messages and Proclamations, ed. Don E. Fehrenbacher, New York: The Library of America, 1989b, 19). Chapter 1 of the dissertation illustrates that the lineage running through Jefferson to the (new) Republican party, in which Lincoln later played a vital role. Secondly, in the eyes of the critics of Lincoln, the association between Whitman and Lincoln is not on sound footing. It is mere Whitman's (and his critics') one-sided love for Lincoln. (Eric Foner, RECENT BOOK REVIEWS Lincoln and Whitman: Parallel Lives in Civil War Washington By Daniel Mark Epstein http://www.ericfoner.com/reviews/021504wpbw.html; Mark E. Neely, Jr., "Whitman and the Civil War: A Response to Helen Vendler," Michigan Quarterly Review vol. XXXIX, Issue. 1 (Winter 2000) http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.act2080.0039.103). Given these, the incorporation of Jefferson as the intermediary between Whitman and Lincoln makes the association between the two sounder. That said, I stop here since the relation between Jefferson and Lincoln is out of the scope of the dissertation.

Whitman 1965, 517. In the poem titled "Election Day, November, 1884," Whitman said, "These stormy gusts and winds waft precious ships, / Swell'd Washington's, Jefferson's, Lincoln's sails."

way of reading of Whitman's journalistic works "Whitman the future poet bias." The semantics and forms found in the notebooks have come to eclipse the politics in his journalistic works, leading to the slight of the influence of Jefferson on Whitman. In other words, the critics of Whitman have been so intent on finding the association between Walter Whitman and Walt Whitman that Walter Whitman's references to Jefferson have been under their radar since Walt Whitman rarely refers to Jefferson in *Leaves of Grass*.

Whitman's olfactory tropes have been neglected for different reasons. First of all, the main approaches to Whitman's works have been from the critic's position that Whitman is a Transcendentalist, and thus what seems incompatible with Transcendentalism has been beneath their notice. The negative attitude toward Whitman's olfactory tropes dates back to Emerson himself, who set a precedent by stating that "There are parts of the book where I hold my nose as I read. [...] it is a fine art if he can deodorise his illustration... (That Emerson views Whitman's olfactory tropes as a breach of the literary decorum conversely shows that Whitman's olfactory tropes typify Whitman's "new decorums." More generally, since the time of Whitman and Emerson, our society has been more and more deodorized because of the animalistic aspect of the sense of smell —, the phenomenon so prevalent that the critics, in their criticism, seem under the influence of it; they deodorize Whitman's works in their reading. Just as importantly, although critics point out the import of the five senses in

⁹ Erkkila 1989, 6-7.

¹⁰ Joseph Beaver, Walt Whitman – Poet of Science (New York: King's Crown Press, 1951), 121.

¹¹ Moncure Daniel Conway, *Emerson at home and abroad* (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1882), 360.

¹² David Howes, "Olfaction and Transition" in *The varieties of sensory experience: A sourcebook in the anthropology of the senses*, ed. David Howes (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 144.

¹³ Stephen Kern, "Olfactory Ontology and Scented Harmonies: on the History of Smell," *The Journal of Popular Culture* vol. 7, no. 4 (1974): 816.

Whitman's poems – Whitman said that "I am the poet of the body" ¹⁴ –, when some of them refer to specific sense, their focus tend to be on the sense of touch, not on the sense of smell. ¹⁵

Thus, the critics of Whitman have held the three major assumptions related to the dissertation; 1) Lincoln is the president Whitman is most associated with; 2) Whitman's writings before 1855 are read solely as "a long foreground" for Whitman the poet (What I call "Whitman the future poet bias"); and 3) Whitman's olfactory tropes are unworthy of investigation. The first and second assumptions are related to the influence of Jefferson on Whitman, and the third one to Whitman's olfactory tropes.

The first assumption is supported both by a chapter entitled "Memories of President Lincoln" in *Leaves of Grass*¹⁶ and by Whitman's saying about the centrality of the Civil War in *Leaves of Grass*," which relatively devalues what Whitman wrote before the Civil War, let alone before 1855, and indirectly helps to reinforce the second assumption where the critics tend to "pick and choose" Whitman's journalistic statements which match the image of Whitman the poet, and to take those statements as a given without examining the validity and role of them. I emphasize that the second assumption ("Whitman the future poet bias") highlights the problematic this dissertation attempts to clarify, especially in Part 1.

One factor to consider is the nature of the compilation of Whitman's journalistic works. For a long time, the research on Whitman as a journalist had been mainly based on fragmentary sources. In 1998 and 2003, Herbert Bergman edited two comprehensive books on Whitman the journalist: *The Collected Writings of Walt Whitman: The Journalism I:* 1838-1846 and *The Collected Writings of Walt Whitman: The Journalism II:* 1846-1848. Yet, bad habits die hard. At the end of his "Introduction," Bergman concludes:

Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass: The First (1855) Edition*, ed. Malcolm Cowley (New York: Viking, 1959), 44; in the deathbed edition of *Leaves of Grass*, the term "body" here is written capitalized. (Whitman 1965, 48)

Roger Asselineau, *The Evolution Of Walt Whitman: The Creation Of A Book* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press Of Harvard University Press, 1962), 10, 13.

¹⁶ Whitman 1965, 328-339.

¹⁷ Walt Whitman, Specimen Days & Collect (Philadelphia: Rees Welsh & Co., 1882), 284.

Whitman's extensive journalistic experience helped make him the poet of *Leaves of Grass*: [...] Whitman's journalistic years helped make him the "I" of *Leaves of Grass*, helped make him a poetic teacher-reformer, helped make him the poet-prophet of Democracy. If it had not been for his journalistic years, Whitman would not have become *the* Whitman of *Leaves of Grass*. (original emphasis)¹⁸

Bergman indicates that Whitman's journalistic writings have significance only because we can see the chrysalis of the future poet in them. It is a tacit understanding that we read those writings of Whitman solely to find some association between Whitman the journalist and Whitman the poet. With the aforementioned bias for notebooks, the rests – including the influence of Jefferson on Whitman – have become something like what Russell J. Reising calls "the unused past" in the criticism of Whitman. As the next section will introduce, when we view Whitman's poetic enterprise in the framework of the larger American experiment, an investigation of it without the influence of Jefferson leads us nowhere. Part 1 and 2 of this dissertation is an attempt to explore this vacuum in the criticism of Whitman with the help of "the unused past" – abundant documents which would help me to connect Whitman and Jefferson.

Part 3 of the dissertation is also related to "the unused past." Whitman's olfactory tropes have been "unused" in the criticism of Whitman mainly due to its incompatibility with Transcendentalism. Yet, as in the case of Jefferson's influence on Whitman, when we view Whitman's poetic enterprise in the framework of the larger American experiment, a new perspective emerges. Whitman's uncompromising dedication to the American experiment of self-government — especially self-government in poeticization — induced him to surpass the limit of Transcendentalism in his employment of olfactory tropes, and those tropes can be understood in the context of poetic-political experiment. In this framework, Part 3 of the

¹⁸ Walt Whitman, *The Collected Writings of Walt Whitman: The Journalism I: 1838-1846*, ed. Herbert Bergman (New York: Peter Lang, 1998), lxx.

Russell J. Reising, *The Unusable Past: Theory and the Study of American Literature* (London: Routledge, 1986), 13-48.

dissertation attempts to explore Whitman's olfactory tropes with the incorporation of various scholarships on olfaction.

2. Idea

That Whitman called *Leaves of Grass* "a language experiment" is well known. Yet Whitman's experiment goes beyond language; Whitman links his poetic experiment with the larger American experiment. If anything, the American experiment necessitates Whitman's language experiment.

Since his youth Whitman had been committed to the American experiment of self-government; Whitman the journalist explicitly employed the phraseology of it – "experiment [test] of man's capacity for self government." Whitman was highly aware that he inherited the legacy of the American experiment, with which Jefferson, the author of *the Declaration of Independence*, was identified. In other words, Whitman long cherished the ideal of the American experiment of self-government in which Jefferson played the central role. ²⁵

Furthermore, in Whitman's early poetry the republican ideals America represents for him are connected to his imagery related to the human body.²⁶ In Whitman's poeticization of republican self-government, at the core is body, which is forefronted by sensuous perceptions

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Walt Whitman, *An American Primer by Walt Whitman with facsimiles of the original manuscript*, ed. Horace Traubel (Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1904), viii.

²¹ Whitman 1965, 562-563.

²² Hannah Arendt, On Revolution (New York: Penguin books, 1963), 35.

²³ Whitman 1998, 55, 481.

²⁴ Merrill D. Peterson, *The Jefferson image in the American mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 445-446.

²⁵ From the biographical perspective, Whitman's homosexuality looms large, and homoeroticism plays a role in his expression of self-government, as "Calamus" cluster in Leaves of Grass shows. While I touch on the poems in "Calamus" cluster ("For You O Democracy" in Chapter 4, "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" and "Of the Terrible Doubt of Appearances" in Chapter 5), I subsume Whitman's homosexuality under the theme of his all-inclusive politics. That I do not forefront the homosexual aspects of Whitman does not deny its significance but merely shows that I shed a different light on it.

Whitman 1965, 735; Sueyoshi Kiyotaka, "Walt Whitman's Common Sense" in *Distinguished Szeged Student Papers 2020*, ed. Attila Kiss (Szeged: JATE Press Kiadó, 2020), 33-60.

through the five senses. The focus is on the acuity of sense, which pertains to the American experiment. It is a sign of health,²⁷ which is in turn an indicator of good physical and mental self-government.²⁸ In other words, the acuity of sense signifies the vigor to continue the American experiment. These correspond to Whitman's quest for "new decorums" – the core of Whitman's poetic self-government – which is exemplified by the dense placement of unconventional olfactory tropes in the first five stanzas of "Song of Myself," – the very beginning of his poetic enterprise. In fact, as Kenneth Burke notes, Whitman's olfactory tropes – prevalent in his poems – are "Key Terms in Whitman's Language."²⁹

Putting Whitman's language experiment in the framework of the larger American experiment reveals two important aspects of Whitman's poetics. Firstly, the influence of Jefferson and Whitman's olfactory tropes are integral parts of Whitman's poetics. Secondly, Whitman's poetics lies in his enterprise to synthesize three kinds of self-government – personal self-governing, self-government in poeticization, and political self-government. In the dissertation, Part 1 is about Whitman the journalist and thus entitled "JEFFERSONIAN WHITMAN: the transition from *Walter* Whitman to *Walt* Whitman," which focuses on the issue of political self-government. Part 2 is about Whitman the poet and thus entitled "JEFFERSONIAN WHITMAN: *Walt* Whitman's poetic endeavor for the continuation of the American experiment" which focuses on Whitman's attempt to synthesize three kinds of self-government in the form of poetry. Part 3, entitled "WHITMAN'S OLFACTORY TROPES: poetic vehicle for self-government," explores Whitman the poet with the emphasis on his language, especially his employment olfactory tropes.

²⁷ Kerry McSweeney, *The Language of the Senses: Sensory-Perceptual Dynamics in Wordsworth, Coleridge, Thoreau, Whitman, and Dickinson* (Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 118.

²⁸ Harold Aspiz, WALT WHITMAN and the BODY BEAUTIFUL (Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1980), 241.

Kenneth Burke, "Policy Made Personal: Whitman's Verse and Prose-Salient Traits" in *Bloom's Modern Critical Views: Walt Whitman*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1985), 27.

Leaves of Grass 1855, the first edition of the book, is unlike other ones. The book witnesses three stages in which Walter Whitman – a hitherto political journalist ³⁰ – introduces Walt Whitman – a fictive character, ³¹ persona. ³² It is noticeable that Whitman differentiates his use of pronouns in the book:

- 1) unnamed "He" a poet in the Preface. In prose,³³ Whitman introduces and seeks acceptance of a new type of poet.³⁴
- 2) unnamed "I"³⁵ maybe *Walter* Whitman to whom the copyright is assigned³⁶ from the beginning to the end of section 23 of a poem later called "Song of Myself." And,
- 3) named "Walt Whitman" "I" after section 24 of the poem.³⁷

In the Preface – with the help of his portrait which seems the substitute of the absence of the author's name on the title page of the book³⁸ –, *Walter* Whitman sought to give birth to *Walt* Whitman. The readers were confused. For instance, Emerson, in the famous letter to Whitman, addressed "*Walter* Whitman," saying that until the last minute he could not "trust the name as real & available for a post-office." This problem caused by the coexistence of the two Whitmans in the 1855 edition of the book is non-existent in the 1856 edition; the

³⁰ Erkkila 1989, 7, 43.

John F. Lynen, *The Design of the Present: Essays on Time and Form in American Literature* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1969), 287. Lynen states that "Whitman is the most impersonal of poets, an artist completely concealed by his fictive character, Walt Whitman, Poet, and a man who delighted in his own experience because he supposed it was absolutely everybody's."

³² C. Carroll Hollis, *LANGUAGE AND STYLE IN Leaves of Grass* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 61. Hollis states that, Walt Whitman is a "persona, something of a device, intended to draw attention to the first American poet to be known by is nickname."

³³ Hollis suggests that the Preface is "a midway between prose and poetry" (Hollis 1983, 230-231). He picks up William Everson's *American Bard* (New York: The Viking Press, 1982) as an example in which the Preface can be converted into verse.

³⁴ Chaviva M. Hosek, "The Rhetoric of Whitman's 1855 preface to *Leaves of Grass*," *Walt Whitman Review* vol. 25, no. 4 (December 1979): 163-173.

³⁵ Joseph M. DeFalco, "The Narrative Shift in Whitman's 'Song of Myself," *Walt Whitman Review* vol. IX, no. 4 (December 1963): 82-84.

³⁶ Ivan Marki, "Leaves of Grass, 1855 Edition" in Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia, eds. J.R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 355.

³⁷ DeFalco 1963, 82-84.

³⁸ Marki 1998, 355.

³⁹ Whitman 1959, ix.

copyright is assigned to *Walt* Whitman,⁴⁰ and *Walt* Whitman signed his reply to Emerson's aforementioned letter.⁴¹ With this, Whitman readily starts rewriting the texts in *Leaves of Grass* 1855; for instance, "By Blue Ontario's Shore" is the preface to 1855 edition turned into a poem.⁴² Unlike in the 1855 edition of the book, in the 1856 edition the titles are assigned to poems, and style of them becomes more conventionalized.⁴³

In line with the critics of him,⁴⁴ Whitman himself acknowledges the distinctiveness of the 1855 edition:

there was an immediateness in the 1855 edition, an incisive directness, that was perhaps not repeated in any section of poems afterwards added to the book: a hot, unqualifying temper, an insulting arrogance . . . that would not [be] as natural to the periods that followed. We miss that ecstasy of statement in some of the afterwork⁴⁵

In *Leaves of Grass* 1855, without actual encounter with readers, and ensuing negative receptions to the book, Whitman could experiment solely on his conviction; he could conclude the Preface with the line "The proof of a poet is that his country absorbs him as affectionately as he has absorbed it."

The dissertation features two aspects of Whitman's poetics – the initial formation and the experimental nature of it. In light of the aforementioned distinctiveness of *Leaves of Grass* 1855, the dissertation prioritizes the 1855 edition of the book. In Chapter 5 of the dissertation, I take the liberty to refer to the other editions of the book since the various instances of

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⁴⁰ Harold Aspiz, "Leaves of Grass, 1856 Edition" in *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia*, eds. J.R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 359.

⁴¹ Whitman 1965, 741.

⁴² Aspiz 1998, 360.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Whitman 1959, x. Colwey states that "the text of the first edition is the purest text for "Song of Myself," since many of the later corrections were also corruptions of the style and concealments of the original meaning; Marki 1998, 354. Marki states that "Whitman's distinctive voice was never stronger, his vision never clearer, and his design never more improvisational than in the twelve poems of the first edition."

⁴⁵ Horace Traubel, With Walt Whitman in Camden (July 16, 1888 – October 31, 1888). (New York: Rowman And Littlefield, INC., 1961), 225.

⁴⁶ Whitman 1959, 24.

olfactory tropes are in order. Chapter 6, though sharing the same objective as Chapter 5 but with the focus on the advent of the poet, refers mostly to the 1855 edition.

3. Methodological overview

Since the politics and poetics of Whitman go hand in hand, my methodological framework lies in New Historicism, which is applied to all the parts – including in Part 3, in a sense that it incorporates anthropology. The Stephen J. Greenblatt, the coiner of the term, states that New Historicism addresses a space where "negotiation and exchange" between aesthetic and non-aesthetic by bringing back history into literary criticism. Although New Historicism is "not a doctrine but a set of themes, preoccupations, and attitudes," it has common concerns.

H. Aram Veeser notes:

New Historicism renegotiates these relationships between texts and other signifying practices, going so far [...] as to dissolve "literature" back into the historical complex that academic criticism has traditionally held at arm's length.⁵¹

[...]

New Historicists can make a valid claim to have established new ways of studying history and a new awareness of how history and culture define each other.⁵²

New Historicism was originally applied in the Renaissance study, and the influence of New Historicism has come to expand to all the literary scholarship.⁵³ The scholarship of Whitman has been also under the influence of New Historicism; David S. Reynolds's *Walt*

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⁴⁷ Stephen J. Greenblatt, "Towards a Poetics of Culture" in *The New Historicism*, ed. H. Aram Veeser (London: Routledge, 1989), 8.

⁴⁸ H. Aram Veeser, "Introduction" in *The New Historicism*, ed. H. Aram Veeser (London: Routledge, 1989), xiii.

⁴⁹ Greenblatt 1989, 1-14.

⁵⁰ Veeser 1989, xiii.

⁵¹ Ibid., xii.

⁵² Ibid., xiii.

⁵³ Ibid.

Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography is one of the salient examples which show its influence.⁵⁴

Louis A. Montrose states that "this project (New Historicism) reorients the axis of inter-textuality, substituting for the diachronic text of an autonomous literary history the synchronic text of a cultural system."55 In a similar vein, the dissertation forefronts political discourse of Jefferson and cultural discourse of olfaction in the reading of the works of Whitman. Furthermore, in the application of New Historicism, the dissertation deals solely with what David Simpson calls "analytic" historicism. According to Simpson's distinction between "analytic" and "prescriptive" historicism, the former is "a reconstruction of the past (whether text or event) that aspires to the status of objectivity",56 and the latter is "an attitude to the present and the future, a directive about how we are behaving or should behave in the world."⁵⁷ Furthermore, with the focus on "analytic" historicism, ⁵⁸ Simpson also notes that "Only detailed research into the historical constituents – more than contexts – of composition and publication can recover the power of silences and repressions."⁵⁹ I want to stress my espousal of "analytic" historicism, which sets the tone and the scope of the dissertation. The aim of the dissertation is to put Whitman's poetics into the framework of the larger American experiment, constituting "a reconstruction of the past that aspires to the status of objectivity." Following Simpson's approach, I will render the influence of Jefferson and the sense of smell the vital constituent – "more than contexts" – in the dissertation, putting them explicitly in the criticism of Whitman through the attention to details.

⁵⁴ Jerome Loving, "Biographies" in *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia*, eds. J.R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 62.

Louis A. Montrose, "Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture" in *The New Historicism*, ed. H. Aram Veeser (London: Routledge, 1989), 17.

David Simpson, "Literary Criticism and the Return to "History,"" *Critical Inquiry* vol. 14, no. 4 (Summer 1988): 727.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 746.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 743.

4. Jeffersonian Whitman: the influence of Jefferson on Whitman

In a conversation with Horace Traubel, who was with Whitman in Camden, Whitman agreed that Jefferson is "among the greatest of the great," adding, "Yes, greatest of the great: that names him: it belongs to him: he is entitled to it." Yet, Whitman, as a poet, demurred; the worship of great hero is the typical characteristic of the poetry of the Old World. In the deathbed edition of *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman refers to Jefferson only once; in "Election Day, November, 1884," he said, "These stormy gusts and winds waft precious ships, / Swell'd Washington's, *Jefferson's*, Lincoln's sails" (emphasis mine). In this way, Jefferson's influence on poems of Whitman, however large it may be, is not in the forefront but in the background. Whitman's references to Jefferson were made in his prose, especially before 1855 when Whitman had not fully established his poetic voice.

The reception of Betsy Erkkila's *Whitman the Political Poet* – one of a few criticisms on Whitman which include Jefferson's influence on him – indicates that the incorporation of Jefferson into the criticism of Whitman is an uphill task. M. Wynn Thomas notes that Erkkila's book is groundbreaking in its "bringing politics into Whitman's poetry." Yet, Erkkila's approach as a whole is so epochal that some critics have overlooked her emphasis on the influence of Jefferson on Whitman. Although Erkkila refers to Jefferson as often as Lincoln through frequent quotes directly from the writings of Jefferson, haking Jefferson "vital constituent" – "more than context" – in her study, there is no allusion to Jefferson in Stephen Railton's review of Erkkila's book. Part 1 and 2 of the dissertation is a continuation of Erkkila's investigation; drawing on her work, I extend the scope and depth of

⁶⁰ Horace Traubel, With Walt Whitman in Camden (November 1, 1888 – January 20, 1889). (New York: Rowman And Littlefield, INC., 1961), 229.

⁶¹ Whitman 1965, 564.

⁶² Ibid., 517.

⁶³M. Wynn Thomas, "Erkkila, Betsy. Whitman the Political Poet [review]," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* vol. 7, no. 1 (1989): 30.

⁶⁴ Erkkila 1989, 353-354.

⁶⁵ Stephen Railton, "Whitman the Political Poet by Betsy Erkkila [review]," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* vol. 45, no. 1 (June 1990): 103-105.

it. The investigation of Part 1 and 2 proceeds from the influence of Jefferson on *Walter* Whitman in Chapter 1, the influence of Jefferson on the formation of Whitman's poetics in Chapter 2, Whitman's poetics with the attention to "pride" in the context of the American experiment in Chapter 3, and to the influence of Jefferson on Whitman's specific poem – "I Sing the Body Electric" –, in Chapter 4.

5. Whitman's olfactory tropes

In Whitman's poetics, body is as a major theme as soul is⁶⁶; he states that "I am the poet of the body, / And I am the poet of the soul,"⁶⁷ and that "Welcome is every organ and attribute of me, and of any man hearty and clean..."⁶⁸ In his poetry, Whitman's emphasis on body is manifested in the form of corporeal tropes, especially tropes related to sensuous perceptions through the five senses. In terms of the five senses, Whitman shows preference for sight and sound; he states that "Seeing hearing and feeling are miracles, and each part and tag of me is a miracle."⁶⁹ Besides, we can detect instances in which Whitman gives primacy to the sense of sight, ound, and touch to the sense of taste – is distinctive. Whitman's usage of the notion of digestion – related to the sense of taste – is distinctive.

Thus, the five senses are thoroughly employed by Whitman. Nevertheless, the critical attention to Whitman's sense tells a different story. It shows two trends; whereas it highlights the sense of touch, it downplays the sense of smell. On this, Roger Asselineau's statements

⁶⁶ Asselineau 1962, 3.

⁶⁷ Whitman 1959, 44.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 27.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 49.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 9. In the Preface to *Leaves of Grass* 1855, Whitman states, "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."

Whitman 1965, 409. In "Proud Music of the Storm," Whitman said, "Such led to thee O soul, / All senses, shows and objects, lead to thee, / But now it seems to me sounds lead o'er all the rest."

Whitman 1959, 49. In "Song of Myself," Whitman said, "Divine am I inside and out, and I make holy whatever I touch or am touched from."

⁷³ Hollis 1983, 197-199.

are revealing. On the one hand, Asselineau asserts that "there is in him a hyperesthesia of all the senses, particularly that of touch." The major critics – for instance, Asselineau, Kerry McSweeney, and Larry J. Reynolds and Tibbie E. Lynch – have noted that touch is the most important in Whitman's sensorium and poetry.

On the other hand, another Asselineau's statement indicates that Whitman's olfaction is on the periphery in the criticism; he states "His (Whitman's) sensuality participates in all the activity of his senses, even his sense of smell." The scant research on Whitman's olfaction includes the works of Burke, Daniela Babilon, and Christopher Looby. While the study of Burke focuses on form, the studies of Babilon and Looby concern contextual reading.

My position in this dissertation is that, true, touch is important but olfaction plays a distinctive role in Whitman's poems in terms of the conflation of his poetics and politics. Through the examination of Whitman's language – as in Burke's study⁸² –, Part 3 of the dissertation explores Whitman's olfactory tropes as poetic vehicle for self-government. In so doing, I draw on both a broad spectrum of existing scholarship on Whitman and various perspectives from olfaction-related anthropology. In Chapter 5, through the investigation of two specific poems – "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" and "Locations and Times" – I propose dilation-respiration-olfaction scheme as a new analytical concept in Whitman's poetics, and the role olfaction plays in Whitman's epistemology. In Chapter 6, through the examination of

⁷⁴ Asselineau 1962, 13.

⁷⁵ Whitman 1959, 11.

⁷⁶ McSweeney 1998, 118.

⁷⁷ Larry J. Reynolds and Tibbie E. Lynch, "Sense and Transcendence in Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman," *The South Central Bulletin* vol. 39, no. 4 (Winter 1979): 148.

⁷⁸ Asselineau 1962, 10.

⁷⁹ Burke 1985, 27-60.

⁸⁰ Daniela Babilon, *The Power of Smell in American Literature: Odor, Affect, and Social Inequality.* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, 2017), 100-109.

⁸¹ Christopher Looby, "The Roots of the Orchis, the Iuli of Chesnuts': The Odor of Male Solitude" in *Solitary Pleasures: The Historical, Literary, and Artistic Discourses of Autoerotism*, eds. Paula Bennett and Vernon A. Rosario (New York: Routledge, 1995), 170-172.

⁸² William H. Rueckert, "Kenneth Burke's Encounters with Walt Whitman," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* vol. 6, no.2 (1988): 63.

the specifics of figures of speech in the first five stanzas of "Song of Myself" – the very beginning of Whitman's poetic enterprise as well as the most important poem in *Leaves of Grass*⁸³ –, I attempt to show the centrality of olfaction in terms of both his language experiment – what he calls "new decorums" – and the semantic of the poem.

Additionally, here I refer to what the critics of Whitman call "jarring" ⁸⁴ or "provocative" ⁸⁵ passage in "Song of Myself": "The scent of these arm-pits is finer than prayer." ⁸⁶ The phrase is so conspicuous that I want to touch on it in Introduction. Although my approach to Whitman's olfactory tropes in Part 3 of the dissertation is basically textual reading, only in the examination of this specific phrase, I here employ cultural context reading.

What is "jarring" or "provocative" to the critics may not be so to Whitman. When we focus exclusively on the sense of smell per se, a different smellscape may emerge. Here the perspectives of Helen Keller, without vision and audio but with "the most famous nose," are helpful. In fact, Keller is unique in her relation to Whitman. Firstly, Keller was American and a great fan of Walt Whitman. The writings of Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman influenced her, and among them, "Whitman is her best beloved" and "an inspiration to her in a very special way." Secondly, she had "the most famous nose." Finally, she also had great linguistic skills as shown in her writings. The combination of her liking for Whitman,

⁸³ Richard Maurice Bucke, Walt Whitman (Glasgow: Wilson & McCormick, 1884), 159.

⁸⁴ Jerome Loving, *Emerson, Whitman, and the American Muse* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 147.

⁸⁵ Babilon 2017, 100.

⁸⁶ Whitman 1959, 49.

Anthony Synnott, "A sociology of smell," *Canadian Review of Sociology/ Revue Canadienne de Sociologie* vol. 28, no. 4 (November 1991): 442. (437–459)

⁸⁸ Scott Giantvalley, "A Spirit Not 'Blind to His Vision, Deaf to His Message': Helen Keller on Walt Whitman," *Walt Whitman Review* vol. 28, no. 2, 3, 4 (June-September-December 1982): 63-66.

⁸⁹ Helen Keller, *Midstream My later Life* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1929), 314.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

olfactory acuity, and linguistic skill helps us to explore the olfaction-centered world, especially this *olfactory* investigation into the works of Whitman.

Intriguingly, Keller makes an observation about body odor similar to that of Whitman:

Some people have a vague, unsubstantial odor that floats about, mocking every effort to identify it. It is the will-o'-the-wisp of my olfactive experience. Sometimes I meet one who lacks a distinctive person-scent, and I seldom find such a one lively or entertaining. On the other hand, one who has a pungent odor often possesses great vitality, energy and vigor of mind.⁹¹

This quote is related to the two aspects of my investigation. Firstly, for Keller, who lives in her distinctive smellscape, the more intensive the body odor is, the better. Body odor is an indicator of the vigor of a person. She might have felt that "The scent of these arm-pits – the strongest body odor ⁹² – is aroma finer than prayer." Furthermore, this utterance of Keller can be said to be an olfactory translation of Lincoln's words: "Every man over forty is responsible for his face." For Keller, odorless is faceless; body odor is an emanation of personal uniqueness. This line of thought leads to the second aspect; the body odor is a vital constituent in human being. More generally, an odor can be something special. Whitman makes an equivalent claim; Whitman's inclusion of odor in the property of a thing will be addressed in Section 3 of Chapter 5 of the dissertation. Whitman and Keller would be of the same opinion. (Although we are not sure how much Whitman influenced Keller's thinking.) Like Whitman did in *Leaves of Grass*, Keller sought to reinstate the sense of smell. Calling it "the fallen angel," Keller states:

It is most difficult to keep the true significance of words when one discusses the prejudices of mankind, and I find it hard to give an account of odor-perceptions which shall be at once dignified and truthful.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Helen Keller, *The world I live in* (New York: The century Co., 1908), 74-75.

⁹² Boyd Gibbons, "The Intimate Sense of Smell," National Geographic vol. 170, no. 3 (September 1986): 330.

⁹³ Keller 1908, 64.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 64-65.

"The fallen angel" is appropriate. In "Olfaction and Transition," David Howes points out "the connection between the emergence of the notion of the person and the sudden lowering of the threshold of olfactory tolerance." In *The foul and the Fragrant*, Alain Corbin explains; "the fact that the odors of the "I" were better defined, more intensely felt, could only stimulate repugnance to other people's odors." It may be these socio-cultural conventions that render what is natural for Whitman or Keller "jarring" or "provocative." Yet, it remains that Whitman's odor experience is unique.

I would like to argue that it is worthwhile to expand on the uniqueness of Whitman's odor experience, and propose to create a typology of "odor experience peculiar to Whitman," in which, as shown above, body odor is vivifying, and an odor can be something special. These two features help to link the two motifs of the dissertation — Jeffersonian Whitman and Whitman's olfactory tropes. I propose to show that Whitman's olfactory tropes are the vehicle for invigorating pride to continue the American experiment. While Whitmanian pride intends to provide the vigor to continue the American experiment of self-government, "odor experience peculiar to Whitman" serves as its medium. Through the poeticization of such odor experiences Whitman seeks to renew the vigor of the Americans after the decades of the Founding of the nation. Part 3 of the dissertation focuses on the instances in which Whitman, amid the degenerating American politics, poeticizes such pride through olfactory tropes.

6. The structure of the dissertation

Throughout the dissertation, I narrow down the scope of my investigation. In Part 1 and 2, on Jefferson's influence on Whitman, my investigation begins with Whitman's departure from party journalist in Chapter 1, proceeds to his choice of poetry as his medium in Chapter 2, and

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⁹⁵ Howes 1991, 145.

⁹⁶ Alain Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination* (Leamington Spa-Hamburg-New York: Berg Publishers, 1986), 61.

to his choice of the American character as the subject matter of his poetry in Chapter 3, and ends with how he poeticizes the American character with the forefronting of experience in Chapter 4. In Part 3, Whitmanian experience will be put in a different light, with the emphasis on form of his poems, more specifically Whitman's olfactory tropes in *Leaves of Grass*. Still, such tropes are examined against the background of the American experiment; Whitmanian experience in Part 3 is Whitmanian experience in Part 1 and 2 in disguise. In this Introduction and Chapter 5, I propose that the olfactory tropes are the vehicle for invigorating pride – which I introduce in Chapter 3 – to continue the American experiment. In this framework, Chapter 6 examines how olfactory tropes function in the first five stanzas of "Song of Myself."

More specifically, in Chapter 1, I expand on Whitman's involvement in the Wilmot Proviso controversy with the exclusion of the influence of "Whitman the future poet bias." Although Whitman's involvement in the Wilmot Proviso is one of the major catalysts in the making of the poet, 97 he, then, was still Walter Whitman, not Walt Whitman. I reconstruct Whitman's silence; when we refer to Herbert Bergman's *The Journalism* Vol. 2 with the focus on Whitman's editorials on the Wilmot Proviso, it is noticeable that his editorship in *the Eagle* can be divided into four periods: the first period from March to December 1846, the second from January to April 1847, the third from May to August 1847, and the last from September 1847 to January 1848. Furthermore, in these four periods, Whitman's silence and broadside on the Wilmot Proviso alternates: the first being silent, the next broadside, then falling into silence, and finally (desperate) broadside again. This cycle is related to New York Democratic politics, and through the portrayal of Whitman's involvement in it, I attempt to show different Whitman, who follows (and eventually transgresses) the party discipline. I provide detailed constituents in the controversy and Whitman's involvement in it (for instance,

⁹⁷ Erkkila 1989, 44.

Whitman held a talk with Preston King about the anti-slavery with the reference to Jefferson, which shows that from the outset Jefferson was the mainstay for those who supported the Wilmot Proviso. 98) I expand on an ideological lineage from Jefferson's Report of a Plan of Government for the Western Territory 1784, the Northwest Ordinance 1787, the Wilmot Proviso, the Free Soil party and to the Republican party, and in so doing, I examine the validity and role of Whitman's statements which expressly indicate Jefferson's influence. It is only when we do these - juxtaposition of Whitman's actions with the making of the aforementioned ideological lineage, the core of which is the author attribution of the Northwest Ordinance to Jefferson, who is also the author of the Declaration of Independence - that we can fully appreciate the significance of Whitman's calling of the Wilmot Proviso "Jeffersonian Proviso." ⁹⁹ Lastly, as the first chapter of this dissertation, its Introduction covers the overarching theme of the American experiment of self-government and its relation to Whitman.

In Chapter 2, I propose that Jefferson's "ward system" – the subdivision of a county into smaller units in order to promote the revolutionary spirit through self-government - has bearing on the formation of Whitman's poetics, and that what connects the two enterprises is the preservation of the American revolutionary spirit. Drawing on Hannah Arendt's insights into the American Revolution, especially her analysis of Jefferson's ward system, ¹⁰¹ I attempt to connect Jefferson and Whitman. This new link between Jefferson and Whitman via the American revolutionary spirit puts Whitman's poetics in a new light; Whitman's "interior American republic" 102 is a further subdivision of Jefferson's "ward republic." In fact,

⁹⁸ Walt Whitman, The Collected Writings of Walt Whitman: The Journalism II: 1846-1848, ed. Herbert Bergman (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 164-165.

Thomas Jefferson, The Writings of Thomas Jefferson vol. XV, ed. Albert Ellery Bergh (Washington, D.C: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1907f), 37-38.

Arendt 1963, 248-255.

¹⁰² Whitman 1855, 205-212.

Whitman the journalist showed a great interest in Jefferson's "ward republic," but so far the critics of Whitman have overlooked this. Furthermore, I propose to explain Whitman's choice of the poem as his medium in the context of the preservation of the American revolutionary spirit.

Chapter 3 examines Whitman's poetics with the attention to the term "pride" in the context of the American experiment. I propose that Whitman poetically synthesizes three kinds of self-government — personal self-governing, self-government in poeticization, and political self-government —, and that in that synthesis, self-government in poeticization is at the center with the term "pride" as a pivotal constituent. In the process, I draw on Matt Miller's study on the term "dilation" and "pride" in Whitman's poetics. Whitman's putting self-government in poeticization at the center is natural since Whitman chose poetry as his medium, and through his poeticization, he sought to set an example for the other two types — personal and political — of self-government. In overall Whitman's poetics — and more specifically in his synthesis of three kinds of self-government —, the term "pride" plays the vital role.

In Chapter 4, I forefront the significance of ordinary people's experience in the context of both Jefferson's political philosophy and Whitman's poetics. Jefferson believed that "American social and historical experience (of self-government during the colonial era) had made a democratic American politics possible and proper," and demanded "continual cultivation and regeneration of that experience." And I propose that Whitman intensifies common experience of the aforementioned Jeffersonian experience. I

¹⁰³ Whitman 1998, 374, 456-457.

Matt Miller, Collage of myself: Walt Whitman and the Making of Leaves of Grass (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 104-160.

¹⁰⁵ Brian Steele, *Thomas Jefferson and American Nationhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 124.

¹⁰⁶ Steele 2012, 132-133.

David S. Reynolds, Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), 285.

categorize such experience into two types: one on a contemporary solidarity (synchrony), and the other on a sense of continuity with the past (diachrony). While I apply this framework to the poem "I Sing the Body Electric," I propose that the flow from synchrony and diachrony of experience in the poem demonstrates a process wherein a plain description of everyday experience – mere enumeration of body parts – turns into a unique American experience of self-government which enables its Republicanism.

In Part 3 of this dissertation, the increasing attention is paid to the form, namely, Whitman's olfactory tropes. Still, the tone and the scope of it remain "analytical" with the textual reading at the center of investigation. Part 3 incorporates various olfaction-related anthropology, especially Alfred Gell's *Magic, Perfume, Dream, David Howes's Olfaction and Transition*, and last but not least Trygg Engen's *The perception of odors* as well as *Odor Sensation and Memory*. As the dissertation proceeds, I draw on a broad spectrum of existing scholarship on Whitman; especially Matt Millers' *Collage of Myself: Walt Whitman and the Making of Leaves of Grass* helps me in both Chapter 3 and 5 of this dissertation with his study on Whitman's key concept of "dilation" and "pride."

In Chapter 5, I explore Whitman's olfaction-centered thinking – his poetics and epistemology – through the investigation of two poems: "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" and "Locations and Times." In the death bed edition of *Leaves of Grass*, the two poems are the only the poems which bear the term "correspond" – one of the key terms in the Transcendentalism ¹⁰⁸ –, and which also happen to bear the term "odor." As regards Whitman's poetics, I formulate dilation-respiration-olfaction scheme as a new analytical concept. In the process of conceiving this scheme, I refer to Miller's study on Whitman's "The dilation" – at the level of concept – and Richard A. Law's study on Whitman's "The

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¹⁰⁸ Lawrence Buell, *Literary Transcendentalism: Style and Vision in the American Renaissance* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1974), 51-52, 149.

respiration motif^{**10} – at the level of physiology – , and find that some element – at the level of sense – is missing. I propose that the addition of the elements of olfaction to their studies leads to the integration of three levels with the result of becoming more thorough framework for explaining Whitman's poetics of the expansion of individual consciousness and communal intersubjectivity. Furthermore, through the rewording of dilation into pride, I recast the scheme into another new scheme, *pride*-respiration-olfaction scheme, and thus conflate pride with olfaction, as I do so through the notion of "odor experience peculiar to Whitman." Whitman's olfactory tropes are for invigorating pride to continue the American experiment. Whitman's elevation of olfaction to the medium for pride in both cases is all the more interesting because his so doing occasions olfaction's shift from the periphery to the center among the five senses. I would like to argue that conflating poetics and politics in this manner is Whitman's poetic-political experiment par excellence.

As regards Whitman's epistemology, I refer to Marion Harris's study on Whitman's epistemology, ¹¹¹ and find that although Harris notes the importance of the five senses in Whitman's poems, she does not specify which sense plays a particular role. ¹¹² With the clarification of the role of the sense of smell, I attempt to show that Whitman's epistemological correspondence between the material and the spiritual is mediated by the olfaction. I attempt to demonstrate that Whitman's thinking is olfaction-centered through the investigation both of his poetics and epistemology.

In Chapter 6, the dissertation continues to examine Whitman's olfactory tropes in the framework of his poetic-political experiment. With this in mind, I attempt to grapple with the specifics of figures of speech in the first five stanzas of "Song of Myself" – the first poem in

¹¹² Ibid., 85-86.

Richard A. Law, "The respiration motif in Song of Myself," Walt Whitman Review vol. X, no. 4 (December 1964): 92-97.

Marion Harris, "Nature and Materialism: Fundamentals in Whitman's Epistemology," *Walt Whitman Review* vol. IX, no. 4 (December 1963): 85-88.

Leaves of Grass 1855. Whitman calls Leaves of Grass "a language experiment," and states that "For the old decorums of writing he substitutes new decorums." It follows naturally that the beginning of his poetic endeavor – the beginning of "Song of Myself" – reflects these Whitman's sayings, and in fact it has a distinctive feature: the numerous presence of olfactory tropes. Yet so far no research has been done specifically on this formal trait of the upfront of the sense of smell in the beginning of Whitman's poetic enterprise. I start the exploration with inquiry into the relation between Whitman and Emerson, and find that the "Whitman the Transcendentalist" approach is not beneficial but rather militates on the specific issue of Whitman's employment of olfactory tropes. Facing this, I incorporate various perspectives of cultural studies, namely the anthropological view on the sense of smell, and approach Whitman's olfactory tropes with the focus on the semantics of odor in Whitman's poetic diction. I propose that this olfactory reading of the beginning of "Song of Myself" demonstrates that Whitman's exploration for new poetic diction and the semantic of Whitman's materialization into a poet – both are correlated – necessitate frequent usages of olfactory tropes. Through three olfactory "celebrations" - calling body odor the fragrance and enjoying it, 114 coming into contact with the atmosphere, 115 and calling breath smoke 116 -, Whitman metamorphoses into a mythical poet. 117 Moreover, a close look at this transition shows that Whitman experiences "inner split" between the New World and the Old World consciousness, but with invigorating pride expressed through "fragrance," he overcomes the split and metamorphoses into a mythical poet. The key here is Whitman's self-government in poeticization, which leads him to elevate body odor to "fragrance."

¹¹³ Whitman 1855, 205-12.

¹¹⁴ Whitman 1959, 25.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ James E. Miller Jr., A Critical Guide to Leaves of Grass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957),

Howard J. Waskow, Whitman: Explorations in Form (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), 159-161

¹¹⁹ Whitman 1959, 25.

The dense placement of olfactory tropes in the first five stanzas of "Song of Myself" shows that Whitman entrusted his career as a poet to those tropes, and that they came to become the fountainhead of his ensuing poems in the sense that they signify his entry into a mythical poet. *Leaves of Grass* has undergone extensive revisions, yet those olfactory tropes have remained intact until to the last edition.

PART 1: --- JEFFERSONIAN WHITMAN: the transition from *Walter* Whitman to *Walt* Whitman

Chapter 1

Walter Whitman's editorials on the anti-extension of slavery: from the Wilmot Proviso to the Jeffersonian Proviso

Introduction

That Whitman called *Leaves of Grass* "a language experiment" ¹²⁰ is well known. Yet Whitman's experiment goes beyond language. In "A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads" Whitman states:

Behind all else that can be said, I consider "Leaves of Grass" and its theory experimental – as, in the deepest sense, I consider our American republic itself to be, with its theory. ¹²¹

Whitman links his poetic experiment with the larger American experiment. If anything, the American experiment necessitates Whitman's language experiment. 122

Since his youth Whitman had been committed to the American experiment of self-government; Whitman the journalist explicitly employed the phraseology of it. In 1842, Whitman states:

We hesitate not to avow ourselves among the foremost of those who desire our experiment of man's capacity for self government, carried out to its extreme verge. Every year, we wish to see the doors thrown wider and wider, and the path made broader and broader. 123

In 1846, after four year's interval, Whitman reiterates the same doctrine:

We must be constantly pressing onward – every year throwing the doors wider and wider – and carrying our experiment of democratic freedom to the very verge of the limit.[...] Here, we have planted the standard of freedom, and here we will test the capacities of men for self-government.[...] All that we enjoy of freedom was in the beginning but an experiment.¹²⁴

The repetition of the same phraseology of the American experiment – "experiment [test] of man's capacity for self government" – illustrates that Whitman was highly aware that he inherited the legacy of the American experiment, with which Jefferson, the author of *the*

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Whitman 1904, viii.

¹²¹ Whitman 1965, 562-563.

¹²² Arendt 1963, 35.

¹²³ Whitman 1998, 55.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 481.

Declaration of Independence, was identified. Looking at the overview of the American experiment is profitable to deepening our understanding of Whitman's devotion to it.

In the eighteenth century, the scope of Natural Sciences extended to the study of Man, who is also part of Nature. An assumption in the endeavor was that proper understanding of Human Nature would lead to a new social system which promotes human happiness. There were two contrasting views about Human Nature – egocentric or sociocentric —, and depending on which view one chooses, the resulting system differs. If Man is egocentric, the government needs to be strong so that it could lead people to human happiness. If Man is sociocentric, people can self-govern. Human happiness is attained without much intervention of government; what is needed is that people pursue happiness as they see fit. 129

When Jefferson formulated his political philosophy, he, under the influence of Scottish moral philosophy, predicated it on the assumptions that human beings are naturally social¹³⁰ and that they are endowed with innate moral sense of telling right from wrong.¹³¹ While the republican experiments such as the seventeenth-century English experiment had ended in failure¹³² because of the lack of "civic virtue,"¹³³ the American experiment showed more promise because of American colonists' actual experience of self-government, ¹³⁴ with the moral sense theory providing a solid theoretical foundation. Thus, in *The Declaration of Independence*, Jefferson incorporated a unique right: a right to self-government.¹³⁵ Jefferson

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¹²⁵ Peterson 1962, 445-446.

Robert G. Weyant, "Helvetius and Jefferson: Studies of human nature and government in the eighteenth century," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* vol. 9, no 1 (January 1973): 29-30.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 29.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 31.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 39.

¹³⁰ Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson vol. VI*, ed. Albert Ellery Bergh (Washington, D.C: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1907b), 257.

Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of The American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 121.

Melvin Yazawa, "The impact of the Revolution on education" in *A companion to American Revolution*, eds. Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2000), 427.

Arendt 1963, 157.

¹³⁵ Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson vol. XVI*, ed. Albert Ellery Bergh (Washington, D.C: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1907g), 44-45.

sought to collapse the dualism of egocentric and sociocentric Man; Jefferson sought to formulate a way of governance in which people exert their own initiative to attain happiness without the coercion from government. Back then, a right to self-government was a novelty, and in this sense, it was called "experiment."

The American experiment of self-government so far sketched was a challenge enough to the Founding Fathers, but there were two additional factors peculiar to America – the size of the thirteen colonies and the slavery - which made the American experiment more challenging. In other words, the Founding Fathers were aware that its size makes America unfit for republican self-government, 136 and that liberty and slavery are incompatible. 137 The conventional wisdom from Montesquieu's The Spirit of Laws helps to throw into relief the relation between the American experiment and the size of America as well as slavery. The first issue Montesquieu raises is the relation between a republican state and its size.

> They (republics) cannot take place but in a small state, in which there is a possibility of a general education, and of training up the body of the people like a single family. 138

Montesquieu asserted that there are two requirements for a viable republic: the small size of a state and the homogeneity of people. Yet, America was poles apart from Montesquieu's portrayal; the aggregate of the thirteen colonies was not small, and the makeup of the colonists was not homogeneous, ranging from New Englander in the North to Georgian in the South. Given these, the Founding Fathers all the more forefronted the homogeneity of enlightened Americans, the attribute which would help to hold society together. 139

The second issue Montesquieu raises is relevant to the subsequent complication arising from the increasing size of America – the expansion of its territory – and slavery, namely the

¹³⁶ Gordon S. Wood, The Idea of America: Reflections on the Birth of the United States (New York: The Penguin Press, 2011), 237.

Baron De Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws vol. I* (London: George Bell And Sons, 1897), 40.

¹³⁹ Wood 2011, 275.

expansion of slavery. As a result, the Founding Father's stress on "homogeneity," which had been the solution at their time, became the problem at Whitman's time. Another Montesquieu's principle of republic states:

If a republic be small, it is destroyed by a foreign force; if it be large, it is ruined by an internal imperfection. 140

This principle connotes the short-livedness of a republic, whether it is small or large. With the passage of time, it became clear that the substitution of "homogeneity" for actual "heterogeneity" of America – a *large* republic – was *imperfect*. The most conspicuous "heterogeneity" in America was slavery; while the North became the Free-states, in the South the slavery took root. The relationship between the North and the South came to betray the symptom of the *ruination*, with the worst hatred being between them. 142

Since the Missouri compromise in 1820, the expansion of slavery came to be the main point of contention between the North and the South. Both the North and the South needed Westward expansion to survive but the North blocked the extension of slavery by the South, the South the homestead by the North. Within this framework, the accommodation of the heterogeneity centered on slavery became impossible. It is in this context that the Wilmot Proviso controversy initiated the escalation of the antagonism between the North and the South, which eventually led to the Civil War. 148

As will be shown in this chapter, Whitman's strenuous involvement in the Wilmot Proviso controversy makes sense; the American experiment of self-government was in danger of

¹⁴⁰ Montesquieu 1897, 136.

¹⁴¹ Wood 2011, 206-207.

¹⁴² Eric Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 313.

¹⁴³ Kenneth M. Stampp, "Introduction" in *The Causes Of The Civil War 3rd Revised edition*, ed. Kenneth M. Stampp (New York: Touchstone, 1992), 15.

In Chapter 2, I expand on the Missouri compromise 1820 and Jefferson's reaction to it.

¹⁴⁵ Foner 1995, 312.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 311-312.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 236.

¹⁴⁸ Eric Foner, "The Wilmot Proviso revisited," *The Journal of American History* vol. 56, no. 2 (September 1969): 262, 267, 268, 273.

demise. I portray Whitman the party journalist who did his best to support the Wilmot Proviso so that, in his view, the American experiment would continue.

Finally, I add that the influence of the American experiment on Whitman is so prevalent that it is not addressed solely by investigation of Whitman's involvement in the issue of the expansion of slavery. The theme of the *general* declension of the spirit of the American experiment – its causes other than the expansion of slavery – and Whitman's reaction to it runs through all the other chapters in the dissertation.

1. The background of the Wilmot Proviso and "Whitman the future poet bias"

The fate of the Wilmot Proviso is riveting. At first, when an amendment for the anti-extension of slavery in the territory gained from Mexico was introduced by Pennsylvania Democratic Congressman David Wilmot on August 1846, it was viewed as just a "push" and thus dismissed as such. (David Wilmot is the eponym of the Wilmot Proviso. Yet, in the introduction of the Proviso, Van Burenites and Wilmot – himself one of them — joined forces. (But when the amendment was reintroduced in 1847 in more potent form, it became "shove," and the Northern-Southern sectional controversy on the slavery flared up all over the nation. (But Although the Wilmot Proviso was rejected and never became the law 153, it eventually came to embody the spirit of Northern anti-extension of slavery which runs through the platforms of both the Free Soil party and the Republican party.

After the "gag rule" 1836 to 1844, ¹⁵⁵ Southern initiatives to extend the slavery – the annexation of Texas as a slave state and the Mexican War – and Northern countermeasure to

¹⁴⁹ Chaplain W. Morrison, *Democratic politics and sectionalism: the Wilmot proviso controversy* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1967), 18.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 16.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 16-18; Jonathan H. Earle, *Jacksonian Antislavery and the Politics of Free Soil, 1824-1854* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 67.

¹⁵² Morrison 1967, 31-34.

¹⁵³ Earle 2004, 3.

¹⁵⁴ Peterson 1962, 190-191.

¹⁵⁵ Earle 2004, 44.

the Southern intention – the introduction of the Wilmot Proviso – brought the slavery issue to the fore in American national politics. ¹⁵⁶ Although eventually rejected, the Wilmot Proviso planted the seed of the future anti-slavery development. The revival of The Northwest ordinance 1787 through the Wilmot Proviso went a long way in the conceptualization of the doctrine of the Free-soil party and the Republican party; The Ordinance – with its anti-extension-slavery clause and its (intentional) author attribution to Jefferson who doubles as the author of *the Declaration of Independence* – provided the cornerstone for the philosophy of the both party. ¹⁵⁷

It is an interesting coincidence that Whitman's prime as journalist – his editorship of *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* from 1846 to 1848¹⁵⁸ – overlaps the period of the Wilmot Proviso controversy when an ideological lineage – from the Northwest Ordinance, the Wilmot Proviso, the Free Soil party and to the Republican party – was established.¹⁵⁹ Whitman witnessed the lineage in the making while he actively took part in the Wilmot Proviso controversy and the Free Soil party.¹⁶⁰

This chapter concerns "Whitman the future poet bias," which I have introduced in Introduction of the dissertation. I take an approach to Whitman's editorials different from the conventional ones where only the parts, which suit the purpose of projecting *back* of Whitman the poet onto Whitman the journalist, tend to be picked and chosen. This chapter is not about Walt Whitman but Walter Whitman. Unlike those critics who "pick and choose" and tend to take Whitman's statements as a given, I examine the validity and role of them specifically in the context of the Wilmot Proviso controversy, and in so doing, I not only read between the

¹⁵⁶ Foner 1969, 262, 267, 268, 273.

¹⁵⁷ Peterson 1962, 190-191.

Whitman 1998, lxiii-lxx.

William G. Merkel, "Jefferson's Failed Anti-Slavery Proviso of 1784 and the Nascence of Free Soil Constitutionalism," *Seton Hall Law Review* vol. 38, no. 2 (2008): 602-603.

Martin Klammer, "Free Soil Party" in *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia*, eds. J.R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 237.

lines but also between the "editorials." The approach reveals the aspect of Whitman which we have not gotten used to: his restraint. For instance, Cleveland Rogers in "Whitman's Life and Work 1846-1847" – the introductory part of *The Gathering of the Forces vol. I* states:

There is every indication that for almost the whole period of Whitman's editorship he enjoyed absolute freedom as to what he wrote and how he wrote it. There is nowhere in his work the slightest suggestion of restraint, [...]¹⁶¹

On the contrary, this chapter will demonstrate that Whitman in his editorship both showed restraint – though the line blurs between voluntary and involuntary restraint – and achieved significance more than so far being thought of.

Thus refocusing on Whitman's editorials on the Wilmot Proviso makes us aware that his editorship in *the Eagle* can be divided into four periods: the first period from March to December 1846, the second from January to April 1847, the third from May to August 1847, and the last from September 1847 to January 1848. Interestingly, in these four periods, Whitman's silence and broadside on the Wilmot Proviso alternates: the first being silent, the next broadside, then falling into silence, and finally broadside again. 163

This cycle of silence and broadside can be said to be related to the New York Democratic Politics, which had two features: 1) its centrality in national politics¹⁶⁴, and 2) the battle between factions which was at work at local, state, and national level.¹⁶⁵ The cycle of silence and broadside coincides with the elections; during Whitman's editorship in *the Eagle* there were three elections – New York gubernatorial election in 1846,¹⁶⁶ New York state offices' election in 1847,¹⁶⁷ and the nomination for 1848 Democratic presidential candidacy.¹⁶⁸ In

¹⁶⁴ Morrison 1967, 75.

Walt Whitman, *The Gathering of the Forces vol. I*, eds. Cleveland Rogers and John Black (New York: Putnam, 1920), xvii.

¹⁶² Whitman 2003, 153-389.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 24, 25.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 25.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 79-84.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 76-77.

other words, when election loomed large, Whitman showed restraint, and once election was over, he wrote with less restraint; yet in the last period, even this rule was broken in his desperate effort for the cause of the Wilmot Proviso.

More specifically, in the first period, until the defeat of reelection of Silas Wright's New York mayorship, Whitman was silent on the Wilmot Proviso, 169 in the second, Whitman engaged in broadside with full of hope for the enactment of the Proviso, 170 in the third, Whitman fell silent with an eye on Silas Wright's nomination for Democratic presidential candidacy, 171 and in the fourth, Whitman embarked on the desperate broadside 172 after the death of Silas Wright and the defeat at Syracuse convention of the Barnburners - Van Burenites in New York¹⁷³ who were for the Proviso – against the Hunkers – who opposed it. 174 Although Whitman maintained his neutrality in his editorials, 175 his contemporary newspapermen counted him as a Barnburner. 176

In fact, when Whitman started editorship in the Eagle, he had already been conversant with New York Democratic politics, and especially he was associated with Van Burenites. 177 Van Buren, the leader of the Barnburner, 178 was President of the U.S. from 1837 to 1841. 179

¹⁶⁹ Whitman 2003, 10-153.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 153-260.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 260-318

¹⁷² Ibid., 318-389.

¹⁷³ The Van Buren faction in New York were known locally as the Barnburners (Morrison, 1967, 24)

¹⁷⁴ The antagonism between the Barnburners and the Hunkers dates back to the split in New York Democrats over the economic issues such as internal improvements, the national bank, and state corporations. (Earle, 2004,

Whitman 2003, 323-324, 345, 351.

Whitman 1998, lxviii, lxix.

¹⁷⁷ It can be said that Van Buren, a Jeffersonian who typified the Old Republicanism (Peterson 1962, 461-62), was a bridge between Jefferson and Whitman. Just as Whitman made his political début in supporting Van Buren, Van Buren had done so in supporting Jefferson. (William M. Holland, The Life and Political Opinions of Martin Van Buren, Vice President of The United States, Hartford: Belknap & Hamersley, 1835, 81-2) In his autobiography, Van Buren states that "from my boyhood I had been a zealous partisan, supporting with all my power the administrations of Jefferson and Madison" (Chapter II). In Chapter XVII, of the book, Van Buren recalls his pilgrimage to Monticello (Martin Van Buren, The Autobiography of Martin Van Buren, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969).

¹⁷⁸ Earle 2004, 62. 179 Whitman 1998, 489.

In 1840 Whitman campaigned for Van Buren,¹⁸⁰ and in 1842 and 1843 Whitman wrote the editorials about Buren's reelection as President.¹⁸¹ Although Whitman did not specify the reason of the defeat of Van Buren in those editorials, Whitman must have known that many Barnburners viewed "lackluster support by Hunkers in New York and southerners in general" as the cause of it.

And thus, it can be said that Whitman's editorials on the Wilmot Proviso were partisan. For instance, Whitman ignored those who called the Wilmot Proviso unnecessary because of the unsuitability of slave labor in the territory to be gained from Mexico. The Wilmot Proviso was not only the cause for the anti-extension of slavery but also a political tool to gain upper hand in the Democratic intraparty battle between the Barnburners and the Hunkers.

It can be said that Walter Whitman's editorials on the Wilmot Proviso are a narrative of the New York politics during the period, written from the viewpoint of a Democrat at a local (of vital importance) level. Whitman is the protagonist, and key characters include the younger generation of New York Barnburners who had not undergone the hardship of Missouri Compromise 1820, and thus could grasp the nettle of the slavery issue more bravely than older generation who had experienced it.¹⁸⁴

2. The Wilmot Proviso

Slavery – with its apparent contradiction with the republican ideal – had nagged the U.S. since its founding. ¹⁸⁵ The U.S. of the original 13 colonies underwent westward expansion, mainly consisting of the Old Northwest cession and the Louisiana Purchase, and with the expansion

¹⁸¹ Ibid., lviii, 49-50, 75,

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., xxxiii.

¹⁸² Earle 2004, 62.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 18-19.

¹⁸⁴ Foner 1969, 278.

¹⁸⁵ Wood 2011, 206.

came the issue of slavery. The Northwest Ordinance 1787 banned slavery in the territory. ¹⁸⁶ The Missouri Compromise 1820 drew the line of 36°30' which divided the U.S. into the Northern Free States and the Southern Slave States. ¹⁸⁷ The status of slavery had been settled ¹⁸⁸ with a consensus that the issue of slavery should be local, not national. ¹⁸⁹

In this context, it is noteworthy that unlike the territorial expansions of the past, the Southwest expansion to be resulted from the annexation of Texas and Mexican War was from the start pregnant with the idea of the expansion of slavery. The Southern states intended to break the equilibrium under the Missouri Compromise for their benefit. In the letter regarding the annexation of Texas, Secretary of State John C. Calhoun sought the British ambassador's understanding of "the internal tranquillity of the slaveholding States, and thereby affect the tranquillity of this Union" by showing that both Whites and Blacks fared better under the Peculiar institution. 190

The annexation of Texas as a slave state was against the will of the North which feared that its size translates into disproportionate increase in the southern political power.¹⁹¹ Then came the Mexican War and President Pork's demand for two (later increased to three) million dollars for the negotiation with Mexico.¹⁹² For the North, this was the culmination of the Southern duplicity; if the war were defensive, no such amount of money would be necessary. A natural conclusion was that the money is for the purchase of the land from Mexico.¹⁹³ So

¹⁸⁶ Peter S. Onuf, *Statehood and Union: A History of the Norsewest Ordinance* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), 64.

¹⁸⁷ Earle 2004, 6.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 378.

¹⁸⁹ Foner 1969, 266.

¹⁹⁰ John C. Calhoun, *The papers of John C. Calhoun vol. XVIII 1844*, ed. Clyde N. Wilson (South Carolina: University of South Carolina press, 1988), 273-278.

¹⁹¹ Foner 1969, 270.

¹⁹² John Adams Dix, Speeches and Occasional Addresses (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1864), 179.

¹⁹³ Foner 1969, 273.

far the North had allowed the South to have its way. 194 It is high time that the North faced off against the South. 195

On August 8 of 1846 – near the end of session of the Congress that year –, both President Pork's request for two million dollars and, subsequently, the Wilmot Proviso were introduced. After two days the Congress adjourned – meaning that both were rejected. 197

The Wilmot Proviso was modeled after the clause about the anti-extension of the slavery in The Northwest Ordinance 1787. ¹⁹⁸ By 1840s the Northwest ordinance came to be a symbol of prosperous free institution. ¹⁹⁹ The settlement in the Northwest was a big challenge in the Founding Era, ²⁰⁰ and the Northwesterners came to believe that it is the ordinance that made it successful. ²⁰¹ The settlement in the Northwest – a clean slate without the feudal influence of the Old World ²⁰² – must be republican, meaning that a harmony should be maintained between private initiative of new land acquisitions from government and public goal of survival of the union by establishing the unity among the thirteen original states and new ones. ²⁰³ That the Northwest became prosperous without slavery – owing to its anti-extension clause ²⁰⁴ – was a strong testimony both for the superiority of the free institution over slavery, and thus for anti-extension of slavery in territory which would be gained from Mexico. The anti-extension clause of The Wilmot Proviso stipulates:

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¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 274.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

As previously mentioned in Section 1, Van Burenites played the central role in the introduction of the Wilmot Proviso. (Morrison, 1967, 16-18; Earle, 2004, 67)

¹⁹⁷ Dix 1864, 179.

David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis 1848-1861* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1976), 21.

¹⁹⁹ Onuf 1987, 151.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 1-2.

²⁰¹ Ibid., xiv.

²⁰² Ibid., 38.

²⁰³ Ibid., 2, 42, 53.

The Northwest Ordinance: Article the Sixth. There shall be neither Slavery nor involuntary Servitude in the said territory otherwise than in the punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted; provided always that any person escaping into the same, from whom labor or service is lawfully claimed in any one of the original States, such fugitive may be lawfully reclaimed and conveyed to the person claiming his or her labor or service as aforesaid. (Onuf 1987, 64)

Provided that as an express and fundamental condition to the acquisition of any territory from the Republic of Mexico, by the United States, by virtue of any treaty which may be negotiated between them, and to the use by the Executive of the monies therein appropriated, neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall exist in any part of said territory except for crime whereof the party shall be first duly convicted.²⁰⁵

Through the open defiance of the administration, 206 the Wilmot Proviso changed the game; the voting result of it showed the division "not between Whigs and Democrats, but between northerners and southerners."207 Yet, it took time for the significance of the anti-extension of slavery clause to be fully recognized. Potter points out that "The episode had occurred so suddenly and ended so abortively that its full significance was not perceived until much later.",208

Yes, "much later." It took four months for Whitman to start to editorialize on the Wilmot Proviso. This chapter is about the unfolding of "full significance" of the Wilmot Proviso, and Whitman's involvement in it.

3. Walter Whitman's Wilmot Proviso

As mentioned in Introduction, Whitman's editorials on the Wilmot Proviso – anti-extension of slavery – can be divided into four periods: the first period from March to December 1846, the second from January to April 1847, the third from May to August 1847, and the last from September 1847 to January 1848. This section will examine each period in detail.

3.1 The period from March to December 1846

Horace Greeley and John F. Cleveland, eds., A Political Text-Book for 1860 (New York: The Tribune Association, 1860), 71.

David Wilmot - Pennsylvania Democratic congressman - challenged President Pork's Democratic administration.

²⁰⁷ Potter 1976, 22, 23. ²⁰⁸ Ibid., 23.

This period covers 1) the introduction and rejection of the Wilmot Proviso in August, 2) the campaign for Silas Wright's reelection for New York mayor and its failure in November and 3) Whitman's first editorial on the Wilmot Proviso in December.²⁰⁹

This section concerns two questions: firstly, why it took four months for Whitman to editorialize on the Wilmot Proviso – the subject about which Whitman felt passionately –, and secondly, what significance the first editorial of Whitman on the Wilmot Proviso had. These are the questions to which the critics of Whitman have downplayed, yet I propose that they deserve scrutiny.

As regards the first question of the temporal gap of four months between August – when the Wilmot Proviso was introduced – and December 1846 – when Whitman first editorialized on it –, there are two interrelated factors to consider; one is inherent to the Proviso itself and other is external to it, namely the suppression of it by the specific political situation. Firstly, the Wilmot Proviso simply received little attention²¹⁰; it was viewed as just "push" and dismissed as such.²¹¹ The second factor, influencing the first, is that both Democratic and Whig politicians – including New York Democrats – avoided the Northern-Southern sectional issue, and the public attention was diverted to other issues such as the tariff and war questions.²¹² For the Democrat, especially New York Democrat, their vital concern was to win the reelection of Silas Wright's mayorship.²¹³ Thus there was a restraint on bringing up the divisive issue such as the Wilmot Proviso so that the harmony within the Democratic party

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During the period, Whitman wrote three anti-slave-trade editorials which were not directly related to the Wilmot Proviso: *Slavers—and the Slave Trade* on March 18th (Whitman 1998, 288-289), *Death of Thomas Clarkson* on October 22nd (Whitman 2003, 95), and *Death of a Truly Good Man* on November 13th (Whitman 2003, 118). During the period, Whitman seems to have avoided the issue of the Wilmot Proviso intentionally. Morrison 1967, 21-22.

²¹¹ Ibid., 18.

²¹² Ibid., 22-23.

²¹³ Ibid., 25.

was maintained.²¹⁴ These are the backgrounds for the suppression on the Wilmot Proviso, and Whitman conformed to it by refraining from editorializing on the Proviso.

The result of the New York gubernatorial election – the defeat of Silas Wright – brought the restraint for the party harmony to an end.²¹⁵ The *backlash* set in; although the sectional issues like the Wilmot Proviso was avoided in the campaign, those issues came to be viewed as responsible for the defeat of Silas Wright.²¹⁶ The younger radical democrats such as Preston King of New York came to assert that the Democratic party's association with Southern slaveholding interests led to its defeat not only in New York but also in the wider North.²¹⁷

For the New York Barnburners, the situation was grave. The defeat of Silas Wright – one of their prominent leaders – meant that they lost the control of the state government.²¹⁸ What should be done for the recoup of the loss? The New York Barnburners' answer was to bring up a new issue and resuscitate Silas Wright as Democratic presidential candidate by dishing up such an issue.²¹⁹ The issue chosen was the anti-extension of slavery expressed by the Wilmot Proviso.

In these backgrounds, Whitman wrote the first editorial on the Wilmot Proviso on December 21st. ²²⁰ It was titled "Set Down Your Feet, Democrats!," which shows that Whitman wrote it with a vengeance; this editorial is one of the most important editorials by Whitman on the Wilmot Proviso. Whitman attained two objectives. Firstly, Whitman broke the ice on the issue. Referring to this editorial, Whitman later claims that "We believe the Brooklyn Eagle was the very first Democratic paper which alluded to this subject in a decisive

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibio

²¹⁶ Ibid., 26.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 25.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 26.

²²⁰ Whitman 2003, 153.

manner."²²¹ The validity of Whitman's claim is partially supported by his long-term involvement in New York Democratic politics, especially his association with Van Burenites – the architect of the Wilmot Proviso –, which helped to keep him informed on the unfolding of the Proviso. The next subsection will also examine this claim of Whitman.

Secondly, the editorial had crucial implications in the movement of anti-extension of slavery, as Jonathan H. Earle suggests. Whitman, in the editorial, took the initiative to expand the area which the Wilmot Proviso applies; on the one hand, Wilmot in the Proviso referred to "the acquisition of any territory *from the Republic of Mexico*," and on the other hand, Whitman states that "there are any States to be formed out of territory *lately annexed*, or to be annexed, by any means to the United States." This expanded application of the anti-extension of slavery presaged both the Proviso reintroduced by Preston King on January 4th and New York legislature's antislavery resolutions adopted on January 27th. In fact, this editorial of Whitman is part of the Barnburners' coordinated offensive – at local, state, and national level – against the extension of slavery. The comparison of Whitman's editorial, the King's Proviso, and New York legislature's antislavery resolutions is revealing.

Whitman wrote on December 21st (at local level):

If there are any States to be formed out of territory lately annexed, or to be annexed, by any means to the United States, let the Democratic members of Congress, (and Whigs too, if they like,) plant themselves quietly, without bluster, but fixedly and without compromise, on the requirement that *Slavery be prohibited in them forever*. (original emphasis)²²⁵

Preston King's the Proviso on January 4th reads (at national level):

That there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in any territory which shall hereafter be acquired by or be annexed to the

²²² Earle 2004, 67.

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²²¹ Ibid., 181.

Greeley and Cleveland 1860, 71.

²²⁴ Whitman 2003, 153.

²²⁵ Ibid.

United States, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes whereof the party shall have been duly convicted:²²⁶

New York legislature's antislavery resolution on January 27th reads (at state level):

That if any Territory is hereafter acquired by the United States, or annexed thereto, the act by which such Territory is acquired or annexed, whatever such act may be, should contain an unalterable, fundamental article or provision whereby Slavery or involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, shall be forever excluded from the Territory acquired or annexed.²²⁷

Once breaking the four months' silence on the Wilmot Proviso, the Barnburners embarked on the all-out offensive with the coordination among local, state, and national level. Whitman played the key role in the offensive.

3.2 The period from January to April 1847

The period covers the reintroduction and rejection of the Wilmot Proviso; the Wilmot Proviso controversy was in a full swing. Correspondingly, Whitman editorialized with vigor.

The year 1847 started with Preston King's speech on the Wilmot Proviso at the House of Representatives. On January 4th and 5th, King sought to introduce the bill which contains the clause I quoted above. The crux of the speech was the U.S.'s raison d'etre: whether the U.S. is the agent to extent slavery to lands so far free.²²⁸ King backed up his argument with the Northwest Ordinance – without referring to Jefferson – and the Free Labor theory – slavery degrades the labor, and slave labor and free labor are mutually exclusive.²²⁹ King finished the speech with strong determination:

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²²⁶ Preston King, *The Wilmot Proviso: Bill And Explanation Of Preston King, Of New York, In The House Of Representatives Of The U.S., January 4 & 5, 1847*(Washington: Blair And Rives, 1847), 3.

²²⁷ Greeley and Cleveland 1860, 206.

²²⁸ King 1847, 5.

²²⁹ Ibid., 5-8

Unless this measure shall be brought before the House by a committee, or in some other way, I shall continue to urge the bill I proposed yesterday upon the attention of the House.²³⁰

From then on, it was understood that the Wilmot Proviso turned from "push" into "shove." On the same day, 5th, Whitman reported King's address in the entry "Slavery in New American Territory," which reveals two vital facts. The first one is that Whitman and King held a talk before King's address. The other is that from the outset Jefferson was the mainstay for those who supported the Wilmot Proviso:

It is a significant evidence of 'public opinion' among our Democratic legislators in Congress, that they quite all, (the exceptions are few indeed,) evince by their votes, the determination that there shall be no slavery in whatever new territory is to be annexed to the U. S. by means of this Mexican war. Such is the purport of the Resolution offered by Mr. Preston King, (Dem. M. C. from the 18th District in this State) ...Looking over Jefferson's writings, the other evening, we came across the following item: "What a stupendous, what an incomprehensible machine is man! who can endure toil, famine, stripes, imprisonment and death itself, in vindication of his own liberty, and the next moment be deaf to all those motives whose power supported him through his trial, and inflict on his fellow men a bondage, one hour of which is fraught with more misery than ages of what he rose in rebellion to oppose."

(emphasis mine)

In this context, "we" here is not an editorial we but refers more specifically to King and Whitman. The talk held between them is the evidence that the campaign for the Wilmot Proviso was coordinated at various levels, and that Whitman was affiliated with the Barnburners, among whom Preston King counted.²³² The rest of the chapter will show increasing significance of *anti-slavery* Jefferson²³³ in the Wilmot Proviso controversy; for

²³⁰ Ibid., 8.

Whitman 2003, 164-165; Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson vol. IX*, ed. H. A. Washington (Washington, D.C.: Taylor & Maury, 1854), 279.

Earle 2004, 67.

As Erkkila (1989, 53) notes, Whitman invented an image of anti-slavery Jefferson. Indeed, Jefferson himself was for the "diffusion" argument; he was not against the expansion of slavery in view of seeking a solution of it.

instance, on March 11th Whitman re-quoted – in a fuller version – the same saying of Jefferson.²³⁴

On February 3, Whitman wrote the editorial titled "The Most Emphatic Expression Of Opinion On An Important Subject Ever Given By The Empire State!."²³⁵ The title speaks volume; now the anti-extension of slavery became "an important subject ever given by the Empire state." Whitman reported that both the Senate and the Assembly of the state of New York passed "antislavery resolutions" which I quoted above. The passage of the resolution also shows that the Barnburners came to gain upper hand on the Hunkers. Referring to the aforementioned editorial on December 21st, Whitman continues, "We believe the Brooklyn Eagle was the very first Democratic paper which alluded to this subject in a decisive manner." I propose that this claim of Whitman is plausible. Besides Whitman's conversance with the unfolding of the Wilmot Proviso controversy, New York led the other northern states in the crusade for the Wilmot Proviso; with its passage of resolution on the anti-extension of slavery, New York became the first northern state to adopt the Wilmot Proviso. From January to March of 1847, eight northern states (New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Michigan) followed in the footsteps of New York.

Jefferson said, "their (slaves) diffusion over a greater surface would make them individually happier and proportionally facilitate the accomplishment of their emancipation." (Jefferson 1907f, 249-250.)

²³⁴ Whitman 2003, 222-223
²³⁵ Ibid., 181-182.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid., 181.

²³⁸ Morrison 1967, 33.

²³⁹ Joseph G. Rayback, *Free Soil: The Election of 1848* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1970), 26-27.

On February 17, Whitman, in the editorial titled "Slavery in New Territory," reports that the House of Representatives passed the Wilmot Proviso, with the quote of it.²⁴⁰ Now all over the North, the Barnburner's campaign of the anti-extension of slavery was in a full swing.

Responding to the New York legislature's passage of the anti-slavery resolutions,²⁴¹ on March 1st, John A. Dix of New York, in the Senate, made the speech titled "Three Million Bill," which is the expansion of King's January speech.²⁴² Dix employed the full panoply of the key rationales for the Proviso: the Northwestern Ordinance, Free labor theory, and Free soil – land free of both charge and slavery²⁴³ – theory.²⁴⁴ With full explanation of Jefferson's implication, Dix appealed to the Northwest Ordinance to show that the main tenet of the Wilmot Proviso is not new, but dates back to the Founding era.²⁴⁵ Both Dix's and King's speeches helped Whitman to be armed with theoretical backgrounds on the issue of the extension of slavery, which, in turn, would be the key elements in his editorials on the Proviso.

Nevertheless, the Wilmot Proviso was again rejected in Congress. The Polk administration got three million dollar appropriation without the Proviso.²⁴⁶ In the editorial dated March 4th, Whitman was dejected, but he remained optimistic about the prospects of the Proviso, and urged the readers to do the same.²⁴⁷ Faced with the unsavory reality of the defeat of the Proviso, Whitman appealed to his basic political doctrine:

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²⁴⁰ Whitman quoted that "Provided, further, that there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in any territory on the continent of America which shall hereafter be acquired by or annexed to the United States by virtue of this appropriation, or in any other manner whatever, except for crimes whereof the party shall have been duly convicted; Provided, always, that every person escaping into such territory, from whom labor or service is lawfully claimed in any one of the United States, such fugitive may be lawfully claimed and conveyed out of said territory to the person claiming his or her labor or service." (Whitman 2003, 201)

²⁴¹ Morrison 1967, 36.

²⁴² Dix 1864, 179-197.

²⁴³ Earle 2004, 35.

Whitman had espoused the Free Soil theory before the Wilmot Proviso controversy. (Whitman 1998, 341)

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 187-190.

²⁴⁶ Earle 2004, 137.

²⁴⁷ Whitman 2003, 209.

We, too, desired the enactment of that proviso: but it is by no means vitally important. We look on public opinion as ahead of law in this matter: indeed on such subjects, we have more faith in public opinion than law. The future of the new territory and its organization can safely be left to it.²⁴⁸

This sounds purely Jeffersonian; Jefferson states that "Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves therefore are its only safe depositories." The editorial ends with Whitman's recommitment to the Proviso.

Although Whitman did not refer to the reason for the defeat of the Proviso, I sketch it briefly. One of the names which come to our mind first as a culprit is John Calhoun from South Carolina. Nevertheless, he was not the main culprit; it is Lewis Cass who torpedoed the Proviso. Cass from Michigan was both the leader of western Democrats²⁵⁰ and the enemy of the Barnburners. Speaking of the Proviso, Cass at first asserted that he was for the Wilmot Proviso²⁵², then he, with his awareness of strong opposition from the South and with an eye on his own presidential candidacy, did flip-flop his position on the Proviso. As a result, some Congressmen follow suit, and the Proviso was defeated. Cass became the anathema to Whitman. Later, it is Whitman's attack on Cass's Nicholson letter – the letter on the popular sovereignty tenet, which was against the Proviso – that brought the *denouement* of Whitman's departure from *the Eagle*.

Although the Proviso 1847 was defeated and the 29th Congress was adjourned, Whitman continued to follow up on the Proviso by going over the elements in King's and Dix's speeches. As Whitman asserted in the editorial on March 4th, the public opinion needed to

²⁴⁸ Ibid

²⁴⁹ Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson vol. II*, ed. Albert Ellery Bergh (Washington, D.C: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1907a), 207.

²⁵⁰ Morrison 1967, 35.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 94.

²⁵² Ibid., 28-29.

²⁵³ Ibid., 35-36.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 37.

²⁵⁵ Whitman 1920, xxx-xxxi; Whitman, 2003, 389.

continue to be cultivated for the cause of the Proviso. The editorial titled "The opinion of Washington and Jefferson on an important point" on March 11th covers the aforementioned Dix's speech on March 1^{st256}, which contains the future seed for "Jeffersonian Proviso." After making a distinction between Jefferson's draft of Ordinance for territorial government 1784 and the Northwest Ordinance 1787, Dix states:

The author of the Declaration of Independence and the author of the slavery restriction in the ordinance of 1787 are the same person. The principles proclaimed in the one were doubtless designed by the author to be practically enforced in the other. He stands before the world, as far as the obligations of our social condition permitted, consistent with himself.²⁵⁷

This line of the argument was an eye-opener for Whitman; in the editorial Whitman quoted the related part of Jefferson's 1784 draft of Ordinance for territorial government.²⁵⁸ Whitman concludes; "The fathers of the republic, even in slave states, were in favor of the principles of the Wilmot proviso."²⁵⁹ Nevertheless, very important is that like Dix, Whitman did not *yet* employ the term "Jeffersonian Ordinance" or "Jeffersonian Proviso" as he did later in the editorial on November 4th.²⁶⁰

On April 22nd, in the entry "The new states: shall they be slave or free?," Whitman emphasized that the extension of slavery is against the Founding Fathers' spirit by going over King's and Dix's speeches with the addition of the specific names of the Founding Fathers – Washington, Jefferson, and Madison. ²⁶¹

²⁵⁶ Whitman 2003, 222-223; As previously mentioned, Whitman re-quote the same saying of Jefferson in his editorial on January 5th as the introduction to Dix's speech.

²⁵⁷ Dix 1864, 188.

Whitman 2003, 223; That after the year 1800 of the Christian aera, there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in any of the said states, otherwise than in punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted to have been personally guilty. (Thomas Jefferson, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: vol. 6: 21 May 1781 to 1 March 1784*, ed. Julian P. Boyd (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1952), 604)

²⁵⁹ Whitman 2003, 223.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 348-349.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 253-254.

In the editorial titled "Rights Of Southern Freemen As Well As Northern Freemen. Mr. Calhoun's Speech" on April 27, Whitman made use of the opportunity to touch on the Free labor theory in his refutation of Calhoun's speech in March, which is quoted in the editorial.

Indeed, after all that has occurred during the last twelve months, it would be almost idiotic to doubt, that a large majority of both parties in the non-slaveholding States, have come to a fixed determination to appropriate all the territories of the United States now possessed, or hereafter to be acquired, to themselves, to the entire exclusion of the slaveholding States.²⁶²

Whitman rebuts Calhoun's assertion by saying that the antagonism is not between the Free North and the Slavery South but between the aristocratic slaveowner of the South and Free laborers both in the South and the North. Whitman's focus is on the worth of labor done by white freemen of both North and South, and he asserts that the degradation of labor by slavery makes him against the extension of slavery. This line of thought was in King's and Dix's speech, and Whitman was to revisit it on September, after the four months' silence on the Proviso.

3.3 The period from May to August 1847

After the editorial on April 27th, Whitman fell into 4 months' silence on the anti-extension of slavery. Considering Whitman's vigorous involvement in the Wilmot Proviso since December 1846, his silence is puzzling. Yet, when the light is on the Barnburners' political calculation, the answer is rather plain; the campaign to win Democratic presidential candidacy for Silas Wright pushed the Wilmot Proviso to the back-burner. Yet, in the middle of the campaign, Silas Wright died of the heart attack at the end of August.

²⁶³ Ibid., 259-260.

²⁶² Ibid., 259.

²⁶⁴ Ibid

²⁶⁵ Morrison 1967, 76-77.

²⁶⁶ Rayback 1970, 73.

As previously mentioned, after the defeat of Silas Wright as New York mayor in 1846, the Barnburners thought that they have two trump cards: the Wilmot Proviso and the Democratic presidential candidacy for Silas Wright. The Barnburners had focused on the Wilmot Proviso but it was defeated. Reconfiguration of strategy became necessary; on the one hand, even though the Proviso was defeated, the anti-extension of slavery became so popular that it gained its own momentum in popular sentiments.²⁶⁷ On the other hand, the campaign for Democratic presidential candidacy had already begun, and thus getting Silas Wrights' nomination for it became the priority.²⁶⁸

The Barnburners needed to walk a tightrope: on the one hand, they engaged in a covert campaign to make Wright nominated as a presidential candidacy, and some of them sought support from the Hunkers and even the Calhounites.²⁶⁹ On the other hand, Wright needed to be associated with the Proviso in order that the Barnburners could get back the control of national party.²⁷⁰ All things considered, the Barnburners had no choice but to tone down the attack on the extension of slavery.

Nevertheless, the enterprise to get Silas Wright a nomination for Presidential candidacy came to naught; Silas Wright died of the heart attack on August 27^{th.271} The death of Silas Wright dealt a heavy blow to the Barnburners²⁷² – one of their trump cards was forever gone. Next day, Whitman wrote the eulogy for Silas Wright as intense as he later did for Lincoln.²⁷³ Now all the Barnburners have got is the Wilmot Proviso. The final turn of Whitman's attack – as editor of *the Eagle* – on the anti-extension of slavery soon begins.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 77.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 76.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Rayback 1970, 73.

²⁷² Morrison 1967, 78.

²⁷³ Whitman 2003, 317-318.

3.4 The period from September 1847 to January 1848

The period covers the Barnburners' defeat at Syracuse convention (Despite the Barnburners' insistence that the anti-extension of slavery be adopted as part of the platform, it was tabled), ²⁷⁴ their own separate convention at Herkimer ²⁷⁵ (which Whitman avoided mentioning specifically), and the Democratic party's loss of the election for State offices. ²⁷⁶ The Barnburners lost the tooth-and-nail battle with the Hunkers – the Barnburners called the Hunkers "Silas Wright's assassins."

Whitman resumed editorializing on the Proviso on September 1st, five days after the death of Silas Wright. The content of the editorial titled "American Workingmen, Versus Slavery" is a rehash of his past editorials: Slavery militates against the Free labor, the Founding spirit, and the prospect of future generation.²⁷⁸ Yet, the significance of the editorial lies less in content but more in Whitman's action of editorializing itself.

Whitman came to be less under Party discipline. This was salient in two respects. Firstly, Whitman took his own initiative more than before. While Whitman resumed editorializing on the Proviso, the Barnburners as a faction were "in disorganization and apathy" because of the death of Silas Wright. In other words, when Whitman began editorializing on the Proviso in December 1846, it was part of the coordinated offensive. In September 1847, there was no such a thing. All the Barnburners knew was that the Wilmot Proviso is their last hope.

Secondly, the contents of the other editorials in the period show Whitman's *loss of orientation*. The comparison between his editorials written for the election 1846 and the election 1847 is telling. While the editorials for the election 1846 were written along the party

²⁷⁴ Morrison 1967, 80-81.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 83-85.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 84.

²⁷⁷ Rayback 1970, 76.

²⁷⁸ Whitman 2003, 318-320.

²⁷⁹ Earle 2004, 68.

line for the sole goal of the reelection of Silas Wright²⁸⁰, those for the election 1847 showed no such a focus and even the symptom of schizophrenia. On the one hand, Whitman emphasized the party harmony; in the editorial titled "The opening of the campaign," he states that "We confess to our ignorance of who are "Barnburners" or who are "Old Hunkers," as applied to democrats" – the position Whitman adhered to during the editorship in *the Eagle*. (Yet, as previously mentioned, Whitman was partial to the Barnburners. In light of *other* actions Whitman took, his "ignorance" is merely a charade as editor of *the Eagle*.) On the other hand, Whitman did the *opposite*. Whitman disturbed the party harmony by touching on the Wilmot Proviso, the issue which was tabled at Syracuse convention and thus not on the party platform.²⁸³ The election was slated on November 2nd. Yet, on October 28th, in the entry titled "Real Question at issue!," Whitman states:

All minor points, then subside into comparative insignificance before one: Shall the Democratic ticket succeed, or shall the Whig ticket succeed? We know that certain persons bring other points to bear; but, we think, all will acknowledge that the question we have italicized above, like Aaron's rod, swallows up the rest. – Moreover, this is the question, at present. There is a time for all things; and we consider the staving off of the real issue, through some other issue which is not appropriate here, and at this time, to be unnecessary. A man may be friendly enough to, and an avowed advocate of, the "Wilmot Proviso," and still not feel in the least degree that the whole State is to be lost to us, nor that the coming election is the proper arena to bring it into discussion. (original emphasis)²⁸⁴

Commonsense tells us that the anti-extension of slavery is not so relevant to election for State Offices as state expense or improvement of infrastructure, which Whitman himself referred to in his editorials written for the reelection of Silas Wright in 1846.²⁸⁵

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²⁸⁰ Whitman 2003, 67-102.

²⁸¹ Ibid., 323-324.

²⁸² Ibid., 345, 351.

²⁸³ Morrison 1967, 80-81.

²⁸⁴ Whitman 2003, 344.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 67-68.

Furthermore, on the exact day of the election, November 2nd, Whitman wrote the editorial titled "The "Wilmot Proviso":

Friends of the Wilmot proviso! we earnestly hope that you, of all men, will not abstain from voting the regular ticket, presented at the head of our paper. Is not Mr. Hungerford a fast friend of the principle of the proviso, as recorded by his votes in congress last winter? We are surprised that any of the advocates of that principle can, (if they do,) refuse support to a ticket made up principally of men who are, by their past action, committed in behalf of the intent and scope of that proviso. ²⁸⁶

Whitman transgressed the party discipline. He insisted that the record of the Wilmot Proviso is the criterion in the choice of candidates. (This practice, though the opposite view of the Wilmot Proviso, was in effect at Syracuse to exclude the Barnburners from the convention, and in the South to choose the presidential candidates.²⁸⁷) In short, these two editorials were less about State Offices election but more about the reflection of the Wilmot Proviso controversy. It is apparent that the relation between Whitman and *the Eagle* would turn sour, and at this stage Whitman's days of *the Eagle* were numbered. The excommunication from *the Eagle* caused by Whitman's attack on Cass's Nicholson letter is just a coup de grace.

4. From "The Wilmot Proviso" to "The Jeffersonian Proviso"

On the next day after the defeat of the Democratic party in the election, November 3rd, Whitman wrote the editorial titled "Some Reflections On The Past, And For The Future," and attributed the defeat to the Democratic party's lack of the radicalness to adopt the Wilmot Proviso. ²⁸⁸ Whitman argues that "Every successive ten years has witnessed the most astonishing strides in political reform in this country. And it is to this progressive spirit that

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 346.

²⁸⁷ Morrison 1967, 134.

²⁸⁸ Whitman 2003, 346-347.

we look for the ultimate attainment of the perfectest possible form of government."²⁸⁹ Whitman continues that the progressive spirit which was applied to "the barbarism of restrictions on trade"²⁹⁰ now needed to be applied to "the plague spot of slavery."²⁹¹ Slavery, "with all its taint to freemen's principles and prosperity, shall be allowed to spread no further."²⁹²

The next day on November 4th, Whitman expanded on the theme in the entry titled "Verdict Of The Undaunted Democracy Of The Empire State In Behalf Of The Jeffersonian Ordinance." The title with the emphatic language and the usage "The Empire State" reminds us of the title of the entry on February 3rd: "The Most Emphatic Expression Of Opinion On An Important Subject Ever Given By The Empire State!." Whitman seems to be on to something. Yet, the content looks like a rehash of March 11th's editorial titled "The opinion of Washington and Jefferson on an important point," which covers Dix's speech on March 1st. Nevertheless, the backgrounds between the two were different, and here Whitman sought to refine his argument to turn the table; on March the prospect of the Wilmot Proviso was rather bright with the anchor of Silas Wright; now on November, the Barnburner suffered major setbacks – the death of Silas Wright and the loss of the control of the party and the election.

Whitman, like other Barnburners, was searching for further vindication; they needed a strong authority to back up their claim of the anti-extension of slavery. The recourse to a major figure like one of the Founding Fathers was sought. A close textual reading of the editorial on November 4th shows that Whitman made an effort to directly connect the Wilmot Proviso with Jefferson.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 347.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

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²⁹³ Ibid., 348-349.

[...] the principles of the Jeffersonian proviso – for so it should be called. The immortal author of the Declaration of Independence is as much the originator of the proviso as Columbus was the discoverer of this continent. Vespucius had his office, and Mr. Wilmot has his.²⁹⁴

If a man be sincerely of the belief that the evil of slavery, as a thing to be introduced into the new ground, should not be met by this Jeffersonian ordinance, or something like it, let him entertain that opinion, we say with all our heart.²⁹⁵

Whitman asserts that the author of *the Declaration of Independence* and the fountainhead of the Wilmot Proviso is the same – Jefferson. True, this line of argument derives from Dix's speech, but, as previously mentioned, Dix did not use specifically the term "Jeffersonian proviso" or "Jeffersonian ordinance." It is quite possible that Whitman coined the two terms; when Whitman glanced over the documents of the past and found Dix's March speech, he had a Eureka moment. Whitman sounds tentative. He used qualifications not once but twice: "the Jeffersonian proviso – *for so it should be called*" and "this Jeffersonian ordinance, *or something like it.*" Whitman was also unsure whether the phrase "Jeffersonian proviso" or "Jeffersonian ordinance" is better. These suggest that Whitman himself coined the terms.

It can be said that the coinage of "Jeffersonian proviso" and "Jeffersonian ordinance" in the editorial on November 4th became a breakthrough as significant as the expansion of applicable areas in the Wilmot Proviso in the December 1846 editorial. True, as previously mentioned, from the outset the Wilmot Proviso had been associated with the Northwest Ordinance. Yet, the elevation from "the Wilmot proviso" to "the Jeffersonian proviso" had a vast potential to increase the authority or authenticity. It is a landmark in the lineage from the Northwest Ordinance, the Wilmot Proviso, the Free Soil party and to the Republican party. Just as the Wilmot Proviso rendered the anti-slavery presentable by distancing it from the

²⁹⁵ Ibid

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²⁹⁴ Ibid., 348.

abolitionism²⁹⁶, so the Jeffersonian Proviso would render the Wilmot Proviso more presentable by forefronting Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of the Independence as well as the Northwest Ordinance.²⁹⁷

On the one hand, the Wilmot Proviso decoupled the Anti-slavery from the evangelical and anti-constitutional abolitionism²⁹⁸ by espousing more palatable rationale – the Anti-slavery argument based on political economy.²⁹⁹ Anti-slavery became a viable political movement through the appeal to Free-labor theory – as an issue of self-interest to whites. 300 On the other hand, in the name of the Jeffersonian Proviso, as Dix's speech attests, Jefferson came to double as the promoter of both the equality in the Declaration of Independence and the anti-extension of slavery in the Northwest Ordinance.³⁰¹ The combination is the best leverage for those were against the extension of the slavery.

The attempt to link Jefferson to the Wilmot Proviso spilled over into the platform of Free Soil Party in June 1848; the link between the two became the central tenet of it:

> Resolved, That the Proviso of Jefferson, to prohibit the existence of Slavery after 1800, in all the Territories of the United States, Southern and Northern; the votes of six States and sixteen delegates, in the Congress of 1784, for the Proviso, to three States and seven delegates against it; the actual exclusion of Slavery from the Northwestern Territory, by the Ordinance of 1787, unanimously adopted by the States in Congress; and the entire history of that period, clearly show that it was the settled policy of the Nation not to extend, nationalize or encourage, but to limit, localize and discourage Slavery; and to this policy, which should never have been departed from, the Government ought to return. 302

²⁹⁶ Foner 1995, 61-62.

Peterson 1962, 190-191.

²⁹⁸ Earle 2004, 32; Whitman repeatedly attacked the Abolitionism. (Whitman 2003, 8, 81, 111, 140, 161, 169, 254)
299 Foner 1995, 61-62.

Klammer 1998, 237.

Dix 1864, 188.

Greeley and Cleveland 1860, 18.

Like Dix's March speech, The Free Soil party platform traced back to "the Proviso of Jefferson" 1784 – plainly speaking nothing more than a rejected draft of Ordinance for territorial government³⁰³ –, farther than to the Northwest Ordinance 1787, which "actually excludes slavery." Whitman got involved in the on-going groundwork to establish a lineage from "the Proviso of Jefferson" 1784, The Northwest ordinance 1787, the Wilmot Proviso, and to Free-soil platform. After Whitman left the *Eagle*, he became an active member of the Free Soil party, which lasted until September of 1849 when the compromise between New York Free-Soilers and Democrats disillusioned him.³⁰⁴

Dix's statement that "The author of the Declaration of Independence and the author of the slavery restriction in the ordinance of 1787 are the same person", became the mainstay of the Free-Soil party and Republican party's ideology, and later shared by Lincoln, who in 1854 states, "[...] with the author of the Declaration of Independence, the policy of prohibiting slavery in new territory originated."

As this chapter has explored, the author attribution of the Northwest Ordinance to Jefferson constitutes the pillar of Free-Soilers' and Republicans' ideologies. But who did start this author attribution? It is those who know best the Ordinance, namely, Northwesterners. That they maintained that Jefferson is the author of the Northwest Ordinance required a leap of faith. Strictly speaking, Jefferson is not the author of it; he could not be since he was in Europe at that time. 307 It was widely accepted that the author was Nathan Dane of Massachusetts. To fill the gap – to attribute the authorship of the Northwest ordinance to

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³⁰³ Thomas Jefferson, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: vol. 6: 21 May 1781 to 1 March 1784*, ed. Julian P. Boyd (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1952), 603-605.

Elmar S. Lueth, "Buffalo Free Soil Convention (1848)" In Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia, eds. J.R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 88.
 Dix 1864, 188.

Abraham Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln Speeches And Writings 1832-1858: Speeches, Letters, and Miscellaneous Writings The Lincoln-Douglas Debates, ed. Don E. Fehrenbacher (New York: The Library of America, 1989a), 309.

³⁰⁷ Onuf 1987, 143.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 141-143.

Jefferson –, various brainworks were done. There were two major trains of thoughts. The first was that Northwesterners' desire to be connected to the Founding of the nation tipped the balance for Jefferson as the author; in light of the significance of the Ordinance, not Dane but Jefferson is equal to the task of its author.³⁰⁹ The other was that the comparison between the anti-slavery clauses between Jefferson's draft and the Northwest Ordinance shows that the latter is a diluted version of the former, and thus Jefferson is the "original" author of the Ordinance.³¹⁰ Van Burenites of New York, New England, Pennsylvania, and Ohio shared these ideas³¹¹, which, in turn, were expressed in Dix's speech and trickled down to Whitman the Van Burenite, the association as shown in previous sections. From this author attribution of Jefferson to the Northwest Ordinance, it follows that Jefferson – who was also the author of *the Declaration of Independence* – became the key figure in anti-extension of slavery.³¹²

Conclusion

This chapter has taken an approach of making a narrative of Whitman's editorials on the anti-extension of slavery by embedding them in the Wilmot Proviso controversy, especially in the New York politics. Only doing so, can we appreciate both Whitman's utterances and silences. This chapter has shown the two-sided nature of the Wilmot Proviso – both the cause for the anti-extension of slavery and the political tool in the intraparty battle –, and how Walter Whitman editorialized on the Proviso controversy.

Whitman witnessed and got involved in the on-going groundwork to establish a lineage from "the Proviso of Jefferson" 1784, The Northwest ordinance 1787, the Wilmot Proviso,

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 143.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 144; There are clear differences between the two: 1) Jefferson's plan referred to all territory ceded and to be ceded, more than the territory northwest of the Ohio; 2) fugitive clause was added to the Northwest Ordinance and; 3) Jefferson specified the year 1800 as the end of slavery.

³¹¹ Morrison 1967, 5.

As previously mentioned, those who played the main role in the Wilmot Proviso Controversy were of a younger generation who did not undergo the hardship of Missouri Compromise, and they invented the image of Jefferson as antislavery. (For instance, Whitman was born in 1819, Wilmot in 1814, Preston King in 1806, John A. Dix in 1798)

and to Free-soil platform. Whitman joined the band who elevated "the Wilmot Proviso" into "the Jeffersonian Proviso," and his doing so is a major contribution in the lineage. Another contribution of Whitman for the anti-extension of slavery is his breaking the ice on the Wilmot Proviso with the expanded version of it.

Just as the Wilmot Proviso rendered the anti-slavery presentable by distancing it from the abolitionism, so the Jeffersonian Proviso would render the Wilmot Proviso *more* presentable by forefronting Jefferson, the author of *the Declaration of the Independence* as well as the Northwest Ordinance. This increased authority and authenticity came to become the leverage which played the key role in the formation of both the Free Soil party and the Republican party.

2. The	American	revolutiona	ary spirit:	Jefferson'	s ward sys	tem and W	Vhitman's	poetics

Introduction

Chapter 1 has examined Whitman's departure from party journalist over the Wilmot Proviso controversy. In this chapter, Whitman's choice of his new medium³¹³ – poetry – is investigated.

It is very hard to do an exhaustive study on the chronology of the birth of *Leaves of Grass* 1855 ³¹⁴ since there are two major obstacles. Firstly, Whitman's own remarks are contradictory, ³¹⁵ and secondly, manuscript evidence is "scant and inaccessible." ³¹⁶ Yet, as Matt Miller in *Collage of myself: Walt Whitman and the Making of Leaves of Grass* shows, the gestation period of *Leaves of grass* can be narrowed down to the period around from 1847 to 1854, ³¹⁷ with which Whitman himself and his biographer Richard Maurice Bucke agree. ³¹⁸ Besides, the catalyst for the birth of *Leaves of Grass* 1855 also has suffered from the same problem of uncertainty; the main cause here is that Whitman was manipulative in making his public image, ³¹⁹ and thus critics' explanations have ranged from mystical experience, Transcendentalism, politics, to sexuality. ³²⁰

Among these explanations, as the previous chapter explored, I view the U.S. political crisis as a major cause of Whitman's transformation from journalist to poet. For instance, Betsy Erkkila in *Whitman: the Political Poet* states that the deepening of the political crisis in the 1840s and 1850s – the slavery and the disunion – and Whitman's disillusionment about the party politics pushed him to adopt an alternative medium of poetry instead of

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Strictly speaking, Whitman had written "conventional" poetry as early as in 1838. Here, "new medium" signifies the beginning of Whitman's enterprise of "unconventional" poetry – *Leaves of Grass* 1855. (Miller 2010, 8.)

³¹⁴ Miller 2010, xiii, 1.

³¹⁵ Ibid., 4, 37.

³¹⁶ Ibid., xiii.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 36-38.

³¹⁸ Whitman 1882, 278; Bucke 1884, 135.

³¹⁹ Miller 2010, 86.

³²⁰ Ibid., xiii, 9, 38.

journalism.³²¹ In his so doing, Whitman sought to reconcile the paradox of states and federal government as well as private and public realms³²² by resort to the American revolutionary spirit of '76.³²³

The spirit of '76 deserves scrutiny. In general, revolutionary spirit contains contrastive elements: the spirit of the new and the concern with stability based on it.³²⁴ In the American Revolution, the mainspring lay in the spirit of experiment of self-government.³²⁵ In the investigation of the American revolutionary spirit, we need to be discriminating so that we treat it as an entity separate from the Revolution itself, though both were interconnected and influenced each other in the course of the events leading up to the establishment of the Constitution.³²⁶

The American Revolution is distinctive. First of all, after the overthrow of the old government by *the Declaration of Independence*, the liberated Americans – with the experience of self-government in the colonial era – did not degenerate into the state of nature and, in its stead, moved to establish state constitutions.³²⁷ In the course of the Revolution, Americans located the authority in the very act of constituting a new nation; the Founding Fathers themselves were aware that they were the Founding Fathers.³²⁸ This common initiative – the revolutionary spirit – is an essential requirement for revolution in general, ³²⁹ and in the American Revolution, the conversancy with various spontaneously-made compacts in the colonial self-government – Mayflower compact being one of the best known – came to

³²¹ Erkkila 1989, 44, 48.

³²² Reynolds 1995, 112.

³²³ Erkkila 1989, 22.

³²⁴ Arendt 1963, 222-223.

³²⁵ Wood 2011, 326.

³²⁶ Arendt 1963, 141-142, 183; For instance, Gordon S. Wood notes that the Revolutionary War itself became a big business, which affected the character of Americans in a negative way. Wood writes that "The wholesale pursuits of private interest and private luxury were, they (The Federalists) thought, undermining America's capacity for republican government. They designed the Constitution in order to save American republicanism from the deadly effects of these private pursuits of happiness." (Wood 2011, 138-139)

³²⁷ Arendt 1963, 141, 166.

³²⁸ Ibid., 204.

³²⁹ Ibid., 116.

be the source of strength that helped overcome British rule.³³⁰ Thus Jefferson rounds off *the Declaration of Independence* with the phrase "And for the support of this Declaration [...], we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes & our sacred Honor."

The Declaration of Independence overthrew British rule, and the American Revolution moved to the next phase of founding a body politic through the Federal Constitution. It is generally accepted that "Constitutions resolve revolutions." Hannah Arendt asserts that the Constitution is counter-revolutionary; with the resolution of the Revolution, the distinctive American revolutionary spirit – the fountainhead of the Revolution – came to be eclipsed by the Constitution – the result of it. In other words, the only one side of the revolutionary spirit – the concern with stability – came to be forefronted at the sacrifice of the other side of it – the spirit of something new. Here, Jefferson parted company with other Founding Fathers is esought the survival of the initial revolutionary spirit. Against the conventional wisdom that the Constitution is permanent and the revolutionary spirit temporary, Jefferson thought the other way around; the Constitution is temporary origin of the revolutionary spirit permanent. Jefferson was fully aware of the revolutionary origin of the new Republic, and thus also aware that the survival of it depends on the survival of the revolutionary spirit. In this context of perpetuating the revolution, – with the knowledge that the revolutionary spirit can be appreciated only in the actions similar to those in the

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³³⁰ Ibid., 167-168, 178.

³³¹ Ibid., 130, 213-214; Carl Becker, *The Declaration of Independence: A Study in the History of Political Ideas* (New York, Vintage Books, 1958), 17.

Robert A. Ferguson, *The American Enlightenment 1750-1820* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997), 144.

³³³ Arendt 1963, 142.

³³⁴ Ibid., 232.

³³⁵ Ibid., 235-236.

³³⁶ Ibid., 126.

Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson vol. VII*, ed. Albert Ellery Bergh (Washington, D.C: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1907c), 459; In light of generational change, Jefferson was against permanent constitution; he was not against constitution per se.

Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson vol. VI*, ed. Albert Ellery Bergh (Washington, D.C: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1907b), 57-59.

³³⁹ Arendt 1963, 126.

Revolution,³⁴⁰ Jefferson (in vain) proposed a ward system – a subdivision of a county into smaller units in order to promote the revolutionary spirit through self-government - as a concrete governmental organ.³⁴¹

Whitman was fully acquainted with the revolutionary origin of America, especially the significance of the revolutionary spirit, as Erkkila shows.³⁴² But, besides the aforementioned circumstances related to the American revolutionary spirit, the temporal (and concomitant spiritual) gap between the era of the Revolution and of Whitman made it hard for Americans to appreciate the spirit. In the face of these, Whitman, like Jefferson, advocated perpetual revolution. Whitman states:

Washington made free the body of America, for that was first in order

- Now comes one who will make free the American soul.³⁴³

The quote demonstrates two features of Whitman's revolution. The first one is that Whitman embarks on his own revolution; Robert G. Ingersoll calls Leaves of Grass "a Declaration of Independence."344 The other is that while Whitman pays tribute to the body politic of America, his revolution is of "the American soul." In this context, this chapter investigates the relation between Jefferson's ward system and Whitman's poetic revolution. Whitman wrote in one of the most important preparatory notebooks for Leaves of Grass 1855^{345} :

> the people of this state shal [sic] instead of being ruled by the old complex laws, and the involved machinery of all governments hitherto, shall be ruled mainly by individual character and conviction. - The recognized character of the citizen shall be so pervaded by the best

³⁴¹ Jefferson 1907f, 37-38.

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³⁴⁰ Ibid., 234-235.

Erkkila 1989, 3-24.

Walt Whitman, Walt Whitman's Workshop: A Collection of Unpublished Manuscripts, ed. Clifton Joseph Furness (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928), 35

Robert G. Ingersoll, *Walt Whitman: an address* (New York: The Truth Seeker Company, 1890), 13, 25-26. Miller 2010, 2.

qualities of law and power that law and power shall be superseded from the government and transferred to the citizen³⁴⁶

The phrase "law and power shall be superseded from the government and transferred to the citizen" – the essence of Jefferson's ward system – sounds like a manifesto for revolution. Furthermore, this chapter will demonstrate that Whitman – in 1846, around the time when he started hatching his poetic enterprise – showed great interest specifically in Jefferson's ward system. Yet, hitherto, the link between Whitman and Jefferson's ward system has been overlooked.347

This chapter aims to show that Jefferson's ward system has bearing on the formation of Whitman's poetics. This chapter does not aim to solve the issue of the evolution of Leaves of Grass in a definitive way, but rather to offer a new possibility; it is not about a full unfolding of Whitman's poetics but about one aspect of it. As Miller notes, Whitman might have known what to write in 1847 – however vague they were – but surely not how to write it, 348 and he took time to create his distinctive style in the negotiation between what to write and how to write it.349 Still, there are compelling links – which center around the perpetuation of the American revolutionary spirit – between Jefferson's ward system and Whitman's poetics, which this chapter explores.

1. Jefferson's ward system and Whitman's poetic enterprise

The general degeneracy of America at Whitman's time was foreseen even from the outset; in 1785, Jefferson states "From the conclusion of this war we shall be going down hill." 350 Facing this, Jefferson exerted considerable efforts to get the U.S. back on the track; the major

Walt. Whitman, "Talbot Wilson notebook" in The Walt Whitman Archive: https://whitmanarchive.org/manuscripts/notebooks/transcriptions/loc.00141.html

For instance, Betsy Erkkila's Whitman: the Political Poet - the canonical work on the political aspects in the poetics of Whitman – does not touch on Jefferson's ward system.

Miller 2010, 9-10.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 1-160.

³⁵⁰ Jefferson 1907a, 225.

ones include the Revolution of 1800 – what Jefferson calls "as real a revolution in the principles of our government as that of 1776 was in its form"³⁵¹ – and the breaking-down of the bureaucracy during his presidency. Still not assured, Jefferson proposed a ward system. Although the ward system was not put into effect, it is noteworthy. Called by Jefferson himself "the dawn of the salvation of the republic,"³⁵⁴ the ward system has a special significance; John Dewey maintains that ward system is "an essential part of Jefferson's political philosophy"³⁵⁵; Michael P. Zuckert views it as "the most remarkable and the most important"³⁵⁶ in Jefferson's political philosophy; and Hannah Arendt calls it as "a new form of government rather than a mere reform of it or a mere supplement to the existing institutions."³⁵⁷

Intriguingly, Whitman editor of *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* showed a particular interest in Jefferson's ward system. Although the term "ward systems" or the name of Jefferson are not mentioned specifically, Whitman's familiarity with Jefferson's political philosophy enabled him to detect and appreciate the significance of ward system. In the entry "A Great Principle in a Few Words" dated on May 1846, Whitman referred to an article in *The New York Evening Post* – his favorite paper³⁵⁸ –, which featured "ward republics" as "the change that is

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³⁵¹ Jefferson 1907f, 212.

³⁵² Wood 2011, 247.

³⁵³ Alan Taylor, *Thomas Jefferson's Education* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2019), chapter 8, Kindle.

Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson vol. XII*, ed. Albert Ellery Bergh (Washington, D.C: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1907d), 394.

John Dewey, "Thomas Jefferson and The Democratic Faith" in Jefferson Reader: A Treasury of Writings About Thomas Jefferson, ed. Francis Coleman Rosenberger (New York: E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY, INC, 1953), 208-218; Dewey maintains that ward system clarifies Jefferson's view on self-government, which tends to be colored by his other tenets of "a glorification of state against Federal governments" and of "government as a necessary evil." Here, I can go off on a tangent about the relation between Whitman and ward system since Dewey calls Whitman "seer of Democracy." (John Dewey, The Later Works of John Dewey, 1925-1953 vol. 2: 1925-1927, Essays, Reviews, Miscellany, and The Public and Its Problems, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 350).

Michael P. Zuckert, "Founder of the Natural Rights Republic" in *Thomas Jefferson and the Politics of Nature*, ed. Thomas S. Engeman (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 49.

Arendt 1963, 255.

³⁵⁸ Whitman 1998, 81-82.

required."³⁵⁹ After Whitman summarized the article by stating that "All that would be necessary is to restrict the powers of government, as far as possible, to the authorities of the township or counties, or school districts. The great evil of our system has been the centralization of political power,"³⁶⁰ Whitman quoted from *the Evening Post* article:

It can only be removed by the dispersion of that power into smaller masses. We believe that nearly two-thirds of the authority now exercised at Albany could be much better applied in rightly organised townships: that the exercise of it would be more effective and less corrupt: that it would bring responsibility much nearer to the people: that it would tend to spread a more enlarged and intelligent spirit of freedom among the electors: that it would extract a great deal of bitterness from our state controversies: and in the end strengthen the attachment of the people to their government, and cement the bonds of peace and order among themselves.³⁶¹

The comparison between the above quote and the content of Jefferson's letter to Samuel Kercheval in July of 1816 is revealing; the contents are the same; "rightly organized townships" – from which did Jefferson mold ward system³⁶² – correspond to "wards" in Jefferson's letter:

The organization of our county administrations may be thought more difficult. But follow principle, and the knot unties itself. Divide the counties into wards of such size as that every citizen can attend, when called on, and act in person. Ascribe to them the government of their wards in all things relating to themselves exclusively. A justice, chosen by themselves, in each, a constable, a military company, a patrol, a school, the care of their own poor, their own portion of the public roads, [...] will relieve the county administration of nearly all its business, will have it better done, and by making every citizen an acting member of the government, and in the offices nearest and most

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 374.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Ibid

³⁶² Jefferson 1907d, 393.

interesting to him, will attach him by his strongest feelings to the independence of his country, and its republican constitution.³⁶³

It is salient that both Whitman's summary and the quote from *the Evening Post* – after the decades of Jefferson's writing – reveal the essence of Jefferson's "ward republics" and encompass the key notions: "The great evil of our system has been the centralization of political power," "the dispersion of that power into smaller masses," "the exercise of it would be more effective and less corrupt," "it would bring responsibility much nearer to the people," "a more enlarged and intelligent spirit of freedom among the electors," and "strengthen the attachment of the people to their government, and cement the bonds of peace and order among themselves." In short, Whitman's quote from *Evening Post* is a carbon copy of Jefferson's notion of "ward republic," and Whitman calls it "A Great Principle."

Moreover, Whitman, within a month, follows up on ward system in the entry titled "Cut Away!" Whitman starts the editorial with an irony: "That there are 'great measures' before the Congress of the United States, nobody doubts." Yet, Whitman negates "great measures" by proposing an alternative view: "The great labor of political reform, indeed, is more a labor of cutting away than adding to." Whitman continues:

The more we think of that idea of small districts, and letting each one manage its own affairs, as to it seemeth best – under the high control of a few simple and general laws – the more we like it. 367

Unlike the editorial written in May, this one is Whitman's original, and Whitman seems to do some homework of examining Jefferson's ward system at first hand, as the phrase "that idea of small districts, and letting each one manage its own affairs" – the concise summary of Jefferson's writing – shows. Whitman was apparently fascinated by Jefferson's ward system, and this is when Whitman hatched his poetic enterprise.

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³⁶³ Jefferson 1907f, 37-38.

³⁶⁴ Whitman 1998, 374.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 456.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 457.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 4.

Here, the aforementioned significance of the American revolutionary spirit for both Whitman and Jefferson helps us to notice that there is a parallel between the goals of Whitman's poetic enterprise and of Jefferson's ward system. On the one hand, Erkkila states:

> Whitman's poet participates in the act of national creation by carrying on the revolutionary task of transferring power from the government to the individual, $[...]^{368}$

On the other hand, Arendt notes:

Jefferson expected the wards to permit the citizens to continue to do what they had been able to do during the years of revolution, namely, to act on their own and thus to participate in public business as it was being transacted from day to day.³⁶⁹

These two quotes illustrate the emphasis shared by both the endeavors of Whitman and Jefferson on continuous experience of the American Revolution. Both seek to create, in Arendt's words, "a new public space for freedom which was constituted and organized during the course of the revolution itself." The doctrine of ward system is tantamount to that of Thomas Paine's revolutionary pamphlet Common Sense; "We have it in our power to begin the world over again."³⁷¹

Whitman in his self-review of Leaves of Grass 1855 states that "The interior American republic shall also be declared free and independent." With the aforementioned quote "Washington made free the body of America, for that was first in order – Now comes one who will make free the American soul," it is expressly indicated that Whitman, in his revolution, intends to go further than the Founding Fathers – beyond the body politic of America into the individual soul of Americans. It needs to be emphasized that these approaches of Whitman are in line with the American revolutionary heritage; John Adams

³⁶⁸ Erkkila 1989, 49.

Arendt 1963, 251.

Thomas Paine, Rights of Man, Common Sense and Other Political Writings, ed. Mark Philp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 53

³⁷² Whitman 1855, 205-212.

states that "The Revolution was in the Minds of the People." Whitman, after the decades of the Revolution, sought to bring it back "in the Minds of the People."

Another difference between the two revolutions is that while the American Revolution is a joint venture as shown in Introduction of this chapter, Whitman's revolution is an individual venture, rather quixotic one. Still, Whitman's lonely revolution is justified. The vital thing is to show that an individual – Whitman, just an obscure New Yorker – can rise and act; the self-publishing of *Leaves of Grass*, on the Independence Day of 1855, intended to set a new precedent; the act itself has significance. Just as the Founding Fathers were aware that they were the Founding Fathers so Whitman was aware that he – through his own act of revolution – joined the band of the Founding Fathers.

I argue that Whitman's "interior American republic" is a further subdivision of Jefferson's "ward republic." The American revolutionary spirit needs to be nurtured anew at the deeper level – in the mind of individual Americans. Jefferson's statement "Each ward would be a small republic within itself" translates into Whitman's assertion that each *individual* would be a small republic within himself. Like Jefferson's ward system, the poetics of Whitman obliges each individual to re-embrace the American revolutionary spirit. In the next section, Jefferson's ward system will be explored.

2. Jefferson's ward system

For Jefferson, Robert E. Shalhope notes, "the two great guarantors of liberty are the good character of the people and the proper structure of government," yet, both of which betrayed the sign of degeneration in the eyes of Jefferson. Ward system is a measure with the

John Adams, *The Adams-Jefferson Letters: The Complete Correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and Abigail and John Adams*, ed. Lester J. Cappon (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 455.

Jefferson 1907g, 46.

Robert E. Shalhope, "Jefferson's Republicanism and Antebellum Southern Thought," *The Journal of Southern History* vol. 42, no. 4 (November 1976): 533.

potential to regain, at once, both the proper structure of government and the good character of the people.

As regards the checks and balances for the government, there are two ways: horizontal – division of the power among legislature, executive, and judiciary – and vertical – division of the power among the different level of authorities such as national, federal, county, and "ward republic." Jefferson is unique in that he put the vertical approach above the horizontal one, which Montesquieu espoused.³⁷⁶ Furthermore, in this vertical "gradation of authorities," he values most the "ward republic." In the letter to Joseph C. Cabell in February of 1816, Jefferson said:

the secret will be found to be in the making himself the depository of the powers respecting himself, so far as he is competent to them, and delegating only what is beyond his competence by a synthetical [sic] process, to higher and higher orders of functionaries, so as to trust fewer and fewer powers in proportion as the trustees become more and more oligarchical [sic]. The elementary republics of the wards, the county republics, the States republics, and the republic of the Union, would form a gradation of authorities, standing each on the basis of law, holding every one its delegated share of powers, and constituting truly a system of fundamental balances and checks for the government.³⁷⁷

Jefferson asserts that his vertical approach to checks and balances for government beats the horizontal one. Also noticeable is that the flow of the delegation is from the bottom – ward republic – to the top – national government. For instance, a ward republic delegates "only what is beyond its competence" to a county. Most importantly, this way of delegation goes a long way to preventing the concentration of the power at the higher-ups. About this Jefferson, in the same letter to Cabell, said:

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³⁷⁶ Montesquieu 1897, 163.

Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson vol. XIV*, ed. Albert Ellery Bergh (Washington, D.C: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1907e), 421-422.

"divide the counties into wards." Begin them only for a single purpose; they will soon show for what others they are the best instruments. [...] as I am sure they have the will, to fortify us against the degeneracy of one government, and the concentration of all its powers in the hands of the one, the few, the well-born or the many. ³⁷⁸

In the aforementioned letter to Kercheval, Jefferson also enumerates the benefits of ward republic; first of all it provides the citizens with the opportunity to experience self-government by doing the municipal tasks at hand; secondly, those tasks are better handled by the citizens, which leads to alleviation of the burden of county; and thirdly, through the experience of self-government, they can develop the affection to the independence of their country, and its republican constitution.³⁷⁹ In the letter to John Cartwright in June of 1824, Jefferson repeats the advantages of a ward republic:

Each ward would thus be a small republic within itself, and every man in the State would thus become an acting member of the common government, transacting in person a great portion of its rights and duties, subordinate indeed, yet important, and entirely within his competence. The wit of man cannot devise a more solid basis for a free, durable and well-administered republic.³⁸⁰

Here the comparison between the two letters – the aforementioned letter to Kercheval in 1816 and the letter to Cartwright in 1824³⁸¹³⁸² – gives us the food for thought since the Missouri crisis occurred in 1820, between 1816 and 1824. The Missouri compromise draws the line along the latitude of 36°30,' which divides the U.S. into Northern free-states and Southern slave-states. Jefferson called the Missouri compromise "a fire-bell in the night" and because of the federal government's encroachment on the right of State to self-govern³⁸⁴ and

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 423.

³⁷⁹ Jefferson 1907f, 37-38.

³⁸⁰ Jefferson 1907g, 46.

³⁸¹ Jefferson 1907f, 32-44.

³⁸² Jefferson 1907g, 42-52.

³⁸³ Jefferson 1907f, 249.

³⁸⁴ Shalhope 1976, 548.

because of the sectional division it caused.³⁸⁵ Shedding light on "ward republics" with an eye on the comparison of these two letters helps us to grasp Jefferson's perspective on self-government against a background of changing socio-political circumstances.

In these two letters, as previously shown, the main points of "ward republics" in the two letters mostly overlap, but the contexts of these letters differ – before and after the Missouri compromise of 1820. Whereas the tone of the letter of 1816 is rather positive and the main thrust is on equal representation, the tone of the letter of 1824 is less positive with its exclusive focus on the Constitution and the structure of government.

In the letter to Kercheval in 1816, Jefferson begins with the importance of the equal representation in republicanism, and moves to the legislature, executive, and judiciary at the national level and then to the county level. Jefferson said, "governments are republican only in proportion as they embody the will of their people, and execute it," and thus that "our first constitutions had really no leading principles in them." Yet his appraisal of the overall political scene is positive:

Where then is our republicanism to be found? Not in our Constitution certainly, but merely in the spirit of our people. That would oblige even a despot to govern us republicanly. Owing to this spirit, and to nothing in the form of our constitution, all things have gone well.³⁸⁸

In the context of heightening of the equal representation, Jefferson proposed "marshalling our government into four levels: the general federal republic, that of the State, the county republics, and the ward republics." Importantly, while Jefferson was developing his argument, he only surveyed the status quo and recommended his ideas, without directly attacking the structure of government.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 35.

³⁸⁵ Peter S. Onuf, *Jefferson's empire: The Language of American Nationhood* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 113.

³⁸⁶ Jefferson 1907f, 33.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 38.

To the contrary, the letter to Cartwright in 1824 is filled with the sense of urgency. Jefferson begins with the analysis of the Constitution, which dates back to the old history of England, and proceeds to the American Constitution.³⁹⁰ Jefferson said, "The constitutions of most of our States assert, that all power is inherent in the people; that they may exercise it by themselves, in all cases to which they think themselves competent, [...] or they may act by representatives, freely and equally chosen." ³⁹¹ In this way, the topic of the equal representation in the letter to Kercheval in 1816 is reduced to merely a part of the larger theme of the exercise of the power by people themselves. Jefferson, in this context, presents his proposal; "My own State has gone on so far with its premiere ebauche³⁹²; but it is now proposing to call a convention for amendment. Among other improvements, I hope they will adopt the subdivision of our counties into wards." Furthermore, after this proposition of "wards," Jefferson moves to the theme of the proper structural relation between the States and federal government. Firs of all, he categorically denies the subordination of States to federal government. Firs of all, he categorically denies the subordination of States to federal government.

To the State governments are reserved all legislation and administration, in affairs which concern their own citizens only, and to the federal government is given whatever concerns foreigners, or the citizens of other States; these functions alone being made federal. The one is the domestic, the other the foreign branch of the same government; neither having control over the other, but within its own department.³⁹⁵

What made Jefferson revisit the topic of the proper structure of government and thus what made the difference between the two letters salient is the Missouri compromise of 1820. In Jefferson's view, it is about "the power of the central government to regulate the internal

³⁹⁰ Jefferson 1907g, 42-43.

³⁹¹ Ibid., 45.

³⁹² First draft, draft version.

⁹³ Jefferson 1907g, 46.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 47.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

affairs of the states."³⁹⁶ Consolidation – concentration of the power – is the anathema of Jefferson; he said, "by consolidation first, and then corruption, its necessary consequence."³⁹⁷ For Jefferson, the Missouri compromise could become the precedent in which Congress would impose its will upon states as it sees fit and have a deteriorating effect on the American self-government; Jefferson called the Missouri compromise "the knell of the Union."³⁹⁸ With the solidarity felt in the Revolution gone and the Northern-Southern demarcation line drawn, Jefferson foresaw what would happen, namely the Civil War in the 1860s. Here, as Onus points out, for Jefferson the stake is "the legacy of the American Revolution, and of his whole political career;"³⁹⁹ the American revolutionary spirit expressed in *The Declaration of Independence* is in danger of becoming a dead letter.

These contexts make "ward republic" all the more attractive. Its benefits are appealing: to enhance both the character of the people and the power relations between the local and the central government through the direct participation in the self-government of ward republic. In so doing, people could learn to exercise their power and construe the Constitution on their own, and thus prevent Congress and the Supreme Court from encroaching on their right guaranteed by the Constitution. In this way, the American republicanism would become more robust and the bulwark of liberty against the consolidation by federal government could be strengthened. The solid establishment of self-government by a system like ward republic – the vertical checks and balances of the government – might prevent a national crisis such as the Missouri Compromise. Yet, Jefferson's ward republic went no further than being a theory; it never went into effect. In the meantime, the ills of America came to take more pernicious forms in the age of Jackson. Both the horizontal checks and balances – the structure of

³⁹⁶ Shalhope 1976, 548.

³⁹⁷ Jefferson 1907f, 341.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 249.

³⁹⁹ Onuf 2000, 129.

⁴⁰⁰ Shalhope 1976, 553.

government – and the vertical ones – the character of people – showed the symptoms of degradation, which the next section will explore.

3. Whitman: a man of Jeffersonian principles turned into a poet

Whitman became attracted to ward system with good reason. Whitman owned a nine-volume set of *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, published in 1853-54,⁴⁰¹ as Erkkila notes, but Whitman had been conversant with Jefferson's political philosophy long time before. On August 1846⁴⁰², in the entry titled "The principles we fight for," Whitman lays out Jeffersonian principles. Whitman wrote:

Jefferson lays down the following principles:

The People – the only source of legitimate power.

The absolute and lasting severance of Church from State.

The freedom, sovereignty, and independence of the respective States.

The Union – a confederacy, a compact, neither a consolidation, nor a centralization.

The Constitution of the Union; a special grant of powers, limited and definite.

The civil paramount to the military power.

The representative to obey instructions of his constituents.

Election free, and suffrage universal.

No hereditary office, nor order, nor title.

No taxation beyond the public wants.

No national debt, if possible.

No costly splendor of administration.

No proscription of opinion, nor of public discussion.

No unnecessary interference with individual conduct, property, or speech.

No favored classes, and no monopolies.

No public monies expended, except by warrants or a specific appropriation.

No mysteries in government inaccessible to the public eye.

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⁴⁰¹ Erkkila 1989, 19.

⁴⁰² This editorial was published a few months after Whitman was exposed to the idea of Jefferson's ward republic. If the exposure to it, serving as an eye opener, led Whitman to write this editorial, ward republic has all the more significance for Whitman.

Public compensation for public services, moderate salaries, and strict accountability. 403

The lengthy list – which reminds us of the parallelisms of Whitman the poet⁴⁰⁴ – contains two important pieces of information; firstly, Whitman had a firm grip on Jefferson's political philosophy – represented by "The People – the only source of legitimate power" and "The Union – a confederacy, a compact, neither a consolidation, nor a centralization" –, and secondly, Whitman equated the Democratic party's principles with Jefferson's principles. Yet, this equation would invite trouble for Whitman the party journalist; the actuality he faced was different. The relation between the government and people at the time was under the sway of the expansion of both popular government and industrialization, which in turn exposed people to more risk of corruption in the structure of government and the character of them.⁴⁰⁵

In *The Jacksonian Persuasion: Politics & Belief*, Marvin Meters maintains that "The political machine reached into every neighborhood, inducted ordinary citizens of all sorts into active service." On the surface, it seems that people became empowered as in Jefferson's ward system, but this came with the degradations in the aforementioned Jefferson's "the two great guarantors of liberty" — the proper structure of government and the good character of the people. As regards the structure of government, William E. Nelson, in *The Roots of American Bureaucracy*, 1830-1900, states:

All institutions of government – legislative, executive, and judicial – had come to be perceived at bottom as political institutions making inevitable policy choices as a matter of will. One consequence of this perception was to blur distinctions among the ways in which different governmental institutions functioned – distinctions that had been

⁴⁰⁴ Hollis 1983, 30, 34, 50, 70, 139, 226, 229, 250; Hollis notes that Whitman the poet frequently uses anaphora (the repetition of opening words, such as "No" in the quote) and other paralleling devices.

⁴⁰³ Whitman 2003, 36-37.

⁴⁰⁵ William E. Nelson, *The Roots of American Bureaucracy*, *1830-1900* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1982), 9-10.

Marvin Meters, *The Jacksonian Persuasion: Politics & Belief* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), 7.
 Shalhope 1976, 533.

important to the revolutionary and Jeffersonian generations and that underlay the doctrine of separation of powers. 408

Here we see two deviations from the Founding principle: the diminution of checks and balances by the separation of legislative, executive, and judicial institutions, and the consolidation of power through the emergence of bureaucracy. For instance, judicial review, which Jefferson adamantly opposed, 409 came to be generally accepted. 410 Apart from that, based on "a matter of will" (of people), the Jacksonians built up the federal bureaucracy with the presidency the most powerful office in the nation.⁴¹¹

An important factor to consider is America's industrial revolution, which began during the age of Jackson, 412 and ensuing expansion of the private realm. Arendt - who praises Jefferson's caliber to foresee the risk of the corruption of people and take the precaution against it, namely his attempt to introduce ward system⁴¹³ – points out:

> Under conditions [...] of rapid and constant economic growth, that is, of a constantly increasing expansion of the private realm [...] the dangers of corruption and perversion were much more likely to arise from private interests than from public power. 414

The expansion of the private realm gave rise to reconfiguration of the public realm so that the latter could cope with the improvement in industry and transportation. 415 In a sense, the Jacksonians responded to these socio-economic changes, yet, with the result of estrangement from Jeffersonian principles: the corruption of the structure of government and of people. In terms of the character of people, with the development mentioned above, there emerged mutual dependence between the government and people via interest, exemplified by the spoils

⁴⁰⁸ Nelson 1982, 40.

⁴⁰⁹ Jefferson 1907f, 213.

⁴¹⁰ Nelson 1982, 38.

⁴¹¹ Wood 2011, 248.

William Nester, The Age of Jackson and The Art of American Power, 1815 – 1848 (Washington, D.C: Potomac Books, 2013), 189.

⁴¹³ Arendt 1963, 252-253.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 252.

⁴¹⁵ Nelson 1982, 9.

system. 416 This is diametrically opposite to Jefferson's view of good American character – virtuous and independent. 417 Whitman, in the entry "New light and Old," deplores:

In plain truth, "the people expect too much of the government." Under a proper organization, [...] the wealth and happiness of the citizens could be hardly touched by the government – could neither be retarded nor advanced. Men must be "masters unto themselves," and not look to presidents and legislative bodies for aid. In this wide and naturally rich country, the best government indeed is "that which governs least."

Whitman was on to something; something is wrong with America. Here with the help of political science, we can have a more refined understanding of Whitman's discomfiture. Here, Nelson's insight is profitable. He states:

In antebellum America the democratic ideal of popular self-rule was translated into a reality of party government through the medium of yet a third concept – that of the rule of the majority. 419

Nelson emphatically makes a distinction between 1) democracy – "any polity in which the people freely select their rulers" ⁴²⁰ –, 2) majority rule – "a system of government in which at least the members of the legislative branch are elected to office by one more than half the people who are eligible to vote and who do in fact vote" ⁴²¹ –, and 3) party government – "a system of government in which officials are selected and maintained in office by a political organization, usually from among its members." ⁴²² The Antebellum America witnessed an emerging form of party government by the Democratic party, exemplified by the spoils system of an unprecedented degree. ⁴²³ Whitman's discomfiture stems from a paradox; on the

⁴¹⁶ Wood 2011, 248.

⁴¹⁷ Jean M Yarbrough, *American Virtues: Thomas Jefferson on the Character of a Free People* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 48.

⁴¹⁸ Whitman 2003, 301.

⁴¹⁹ Nelson 1982, 2-3.

⁴²⁰ Ibid., 3.

⁴²¹ Ibid.

⁴²² Ibid

⁴²³ Nester 2013, 299.

one hand, Whitman the party journalist took party government as a given; on the other hand, he adhered to Jeffersonian principles.

As Chapter 1 explored, Whitman's involvement in the Wilmot Proviso controversy and ensuing excommunication from the Brooklyn Daily Eagle⁴²⁴ threw the discrepancy between his ideal and the actuality into sharp relief. Whitman called the Wilmot Proviso "Jeffersonian proviso",425 and stuck to it in the face of the party platform which rejected it. 426 Whitman became aware that party loyalty precedes (his understanding of) party principles. For Whitman, the rejection of "Jeffersonian Proviso" is the rejection of Jefferson, which in turn meant that the Democratic party abandoned its own principle. His personal experience in the Wilmot Proviso controversy brought home to Whitman the actuality of party government in which party politics precedes the popular opinion on the extension of slavery. In other words, Whitman became aware that he had overestimated the Democratic party; Whitman had stated "true liberty could not long exist in this country without our party." (original emphasis)⁴²⁷ Whitman had viewed the Democratic party as a party of Jefferson's doctrine, 428 the safeguard of the revolutionary spirit, 429 but in fact it was not. Thus disillusioned Whitman was forced to reflect on his life and reconstruct his raison d'être – something different from party journalist. Yet for Whitman the fact remains that he himself overcame the temporal barrier to inherit the Republican virtue which Jefferson intended to foster among people. And simultaneously, as Erkkila notes, Whitman wondered how he could disseminate the original Founding spirit among Americans. 430 These developments coincided in 1847-48 when Whitman embarked on his poetic enterprise.

Whitman 1920, xxx-xxxi.

⁴²⁵ Whitman 2003, 348.

⁴²⁶ Morrison 1967, 80-81.

⁴²⁷ Whitman 2003, 228.

⁴²⁸ Ibid., 36-37, 347.

⁴²⁹ Erkkila 1989, 19-20.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 42.

I propose that the change in Whitman's self-perception is revealed in how he employs his trope "door" in his editorial and in "Song of Myself." On the one hand, in July of 1846 – before the introduction of the Wilmot Proviso, and thus his disillusionment about the Democratic party –, Whitman wrote an editorial titled "Swing Open the Doors!" in which he states that "We must be constantly pressing onward – every year throwing the doors wider and wider – and carrying our experiment of democratic freedom to the very verge of the limit." On the other hand, in "Song of Myself," Whitman wrote:

Unscrew the locks from the doors!

Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!⁴³²

Although it is Erkkila who pays attention to the import of Whitman's trope "door" and compares the above two writings of Whitman, 433 I propose to go beyond her by taking the opposite position on the relation between Whitman the journalist and Whitman the poet. In other words, in arguing how Whitman employs his trope "door," whereas Erkkila emphasizes the continuation between the two Whitmans, I accentuate the break between the two. In the comparison between the two writings of Whitman, Erkkila states that "his phrases (the quote in "Swing Open the Doors!") roll with the participial rhythms of his later free-verse poems, and his open-door image anticipates the democratic challenge he hurls at his readers in "Song of Myself." In her stress on the continuation between the two Whitmans, Erkkila also notes that "Whitman's Eagle editorials were a prose dress rehearsal for the political text of his poems."

Although I agree with Erkkila in principle, I propose that a close attention to Whitman's usage of "door" shows not the continuation but the break between the two Whitmans. The difference in his perspective is salient: one within the existing institutions and the other

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⁴³¹ Whitman 1998, 481.

⁴³² Whitman 1959, 48.

⁴³³ Erkkila 1989, 43.

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

outside of them. On the one hand, in his editorial of 1846 – before his disillusionment about the Democratic party – Whitman states "every year throwing the doors wider and wider." The comparative form (wider and wider) indicates that Whitman based his idea on the existing institutions; he still had a unified vision on the American experiment, the Democratic party, and himself. On the other hand, the lines "Unscrew the locks from the doors! / Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!" in "Song of Myself" suggests that there was no such unified vision anymore; Whitman became more radicalized and demanded to uproot the existing systems by the spirit like that of Jefferson's "ward system." The above lines in "Song of Myself" reflect Whitman's urge to continue the American experiment in its original spirit.

I would like to argue that Whitman's awareness of the significance of the revolutionary spirit plays the key role in his becoming a poet. Generally, as Shira Wolosky notes, "Poetry is conceived as actively participating in the national life" at Whitman's time. And more specifically, in the context of the Revolution, Edward Tand notes that "A whole body of poetry on revolutionary participants appeared in popular literature during the late 1830s and early 1840s. Whitman was not alone to choose the medium of poetry to retrieve the revolutionary spirit and thus fill the generation gap in this respect. As regards the role of poets here, Arendt's insight, though she does not refer to Whitman, is helpful:

This, and probably much more, was lost when the spirit of revolution – a new spirit and the spirit of beginning something new – failed to find its appropriate institution. There is nothing that could compensate for this failure or prevent it from becoming final, except memory and recollection. And since the storehouse of memory is kept and watched over by the poets, whose business it is to find and make the words we live by, $[\dots]^{438}$

Shira Wolosky, "Preface: the claims of rhetoric" in *The Cambridge History of American Literature, vol.4 Nineteenth-Century Poetry 1800-1910*, ed. Sacvan Bercovitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 148.

⁴³⁷ Edward Tang, "The Civil War as Revolutionary Reenactment: Walt Whitman's "The Centenarian's Story,"" *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* vol. 21, no. 3 (2004): 138.

⁴³⁸ Arendt 1963, 280.

Without "appropriate institution" such as Jefferson's ward system - with the aforementioned disqualification of the Democratic party –, poetry is "second-best" institution to retain the revolutionary spirit. Yet, unlike other poets, Whitman sought to do more than to prevent it from wearing thin with time. It is probable that Whitman was aware where the problem lies; it is not just a matter of generation gap but it is the aforementioned inherent paradox of the revolutionary spirit – its two-sidedness of the spirit of the new and the concern with stability, and thus it can be experienced only in revolution itself without remove – without even the mediation of the Founding Fathers. Just as ward system for Jefferson is continuous revolution, poetry for Whitman is so. Furthermore, this paradox inherent to the revolutionary spirit is the Original Paradox with capitals of O and P, – like Original Sin –, which precedes other paradoxes such as the relation between the individual and the mass, between states and federal government, which the critics of Whitman notes that Whitman sought to solve through his poetry. 439 With the help of the medium of poetry, Whitman sought to have it both ways – the spirit of the new and the durability based on it, two sides of the revolutionary spirit -, and then cope with other paradoxes. (Re)gaining the revolutionary spirit for himself and other Americans is the first thing to do. Whitman intended Leaves of Grass to be "the salvation of the republic," in the aforementioned Jefferson's words about ward system.

This – Whitman's poetic "salvation of the republic" – takes greater significance in the context specific to the U.S. in 1850s – the Northern-Southern sectionalism over the slavery issue. The American Revolution was thought to best express the American national idea, 440 but its legacy was far from consensual and became the point of contention between the North

⁴³⁹ Reynolds 1995, 112.

Susan-Mary Grant, North over South: Northern Nationalism and American Identity in the Antebellum Era (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 25.

and the South. 441 Two Founding documents – *The Declaration of Independence* and the Federal Constitution – came to signify the opposition between the North and the South; the North prioritized *the Declaration* over the Constitution, and the South vice versa. 442 In the slavery controversy, the North forefronted equality expressed in *the Declaration*, and the South right to property in the Constitution. 443 While putting *the Declaration* above the Constitution, 444 Whitman the poet shied away from taking sides; thus he had recourse to the medium of poetry so that he could convey a unifying, de-sectionalized rendering of the American Revolution.

Arendt states that "What the American Revolution actually did was to bring the new American experience and the new American concept of power out into the open." Likewise, in his revolution, Whitman brought "the new *individual* American experience into the open." Here the phrase "into the open" reminds us of Whitman's key phrase – "in the open air." Whitman wrote:

We have had man indoors and under artificial relations – man in war, in love (both the natural, universal elements of human lives) – man in courts [...] but never before have we had man in the open air, his attitude adjusted to the seasons and as one might describe it, adjusted to the sun by day and the stars by night. 446

Whitman brought "man in the open air" into the open; ordinary people are at the center of his poetry. Ordinary people's act of telling about themselves, telling about "interior American republic," has significance. Ingersoll agrees; he states that [In *Leaves of Grass*] "The glory of simple life was sung; a declaration of independence was made for each and all."

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., 28-29.

⁴⁴² Michael D. Hattem, "Citizenship and the Memory of the American Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Political Culture," *New York History* vol. 101, no. 1 (Summer 2020): 40, 43.

⁴⁴³ Ibid., 34, 48.

Erkkila 1989, 19, 46.

⁴⁴⁵ Arendt 1963, 166.

Walt Whitman, *Notes and Fragments: left by Walt Whitman*, ed. Richard Maurice Bucke (London, Ontario, Canada: A. Talbot & Co., 1899), 67.

⁴⁴⁷ Ingersoll 1890, 13.

Whitman linked the revolutionary spirit with a cure for the issue of individual moral at his time. In the editorial (March 1846) on the License Law, with the title "You Cannot Legislate Men into Virtue," Whitman states:

It is amazing, in this age of the world – with the past, and all its causes and effects, like beacon lights behind us – that men show such ignorance, not only of the province of law, but of the true way to achieve any great reform. Why, we wouldn't give a snap for the aid of the legislature, in forwarding a purely moral revolution! It must work its way through individual minds. 448

Later, in his preparatory note for the future *Leaves of Grass* Whitman expands on this theme:

What would it bring you to be elected and take your place in the Capitol?

I elect you to understand; that is what all the offices in the Republic could not do. 449

Interestingly, unlike the aforementioned break in Whitman's self-perception, the comparison between the two writings of Whitman here shows a *continuation* in his view on moral. From the outset, Whitman maintained that "a *purely* moral revolution must work its way through individual minds (emphasis mine)," not through political institutions. The saying of Whitman in the preparatory note that what his poems convey is more potent than the sum of governmental power is the expansion of his editorial of the past. In his continual emphasis on "Moral revolution," Whitman followed in the footsteps of Jefferson, who maintained that spirit of people precedes systems of government. At Whitman's time, "Moral revolution" became crucial in republican self-government; the Founding Fathers' concern that popular power must be limited by popular rights markedly resurfaced in the slavery controversy.

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⁴⁴⁸ Whitman 1998, 290.

⁴⁴⁹ Whitman 1899, 30.

⁴⁵⁰ Jefferson 1907a, 230.

⁴⁵¹ Nelson 1982, 5.

⁴⁵² Erkkila 1989, 61.

The aforementioned socio-economic-political changes made the redemption from the corruption of people an urgent task, and through his poetry Whitman sought the redemption.

Conclusion

From the perspective of the revolutionary spirit, this chapter has sought to illustrate the relation between Jefferson's ward system and Whitman's poetic enterprise. Jefferson was anxious about the degradation both of the structure of government and the character of people, and proposed a ward system to halt those degradations. Ward republic is a space where people can experience the revolutionary spirit whereby Jefferson sought to stem both the consolidation of power and the corruption of people. Although ward republic was not put into effect, it is intriguing that Whitman showed great fascination with it. The goals of both enterprises — Jefferson's ward republic and Whitman's Leaves of Grass — share the significance on continuous experience of the American Revolution. Like Jefferson, Whitman intended Leaves of Grass to be "the salvation of the republic," and Whitman's "interior republic" — with more focus on the mind of individual Americans — can be called the further subdivision of Jefferson's ward republic. Like Jefferson's ward system, the poetics of Whitman sought to oblige each individual to re-embrace the revolutionary spirit.

PART 2: --- JEFFERSONIAN WHITMAN: Walt Whitman's poetic endeavor for the continuation of the American experiment

3. Whitman's poetics with the attention to the term "pride" in the context of the American experiment

Introduction

Part 1 of the dissertation has studied Jefferson's influence on Whitman in the transition from *Walter* Whitman to *Walt* Whitman. After the examination of Whitman's departure from party journalist in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 has investigated his choice of poetry as his new medium. Part 2 of the dissertation studies continuing Jefferson's influence on Whitman's poetics. In this chapter, the subject matter of his poetry – the American character – is explored.

It needs to be emphasized that Whitman forefronted self-liberation and self-government in *Leaves of Grass*. With the forefronting of self-agency, Whitman sought to intensify people's awareness of the legacy of the American experiment of self-government. With this, I propose that the subject matter of *Leaves of Grass* is the American character, and that the main theme of the book is to poetically synthesize three kinds of self-government – personal self-governing, self-government in poeticization, and political self-government. In the process of the enterprise, Whitman formulated a unique concept of "pride," which plays a vital role in the aforementioned synthesis.

As illustrated in Chapter 1 and 2 of the dissertation, Whitman had become disillusioned by the U.S. politics in a conventional sense. As a result, Whitman came to forefront his espousal of the view of the ordinary people, and embarked on "Moral revolution" as Chapter 2 explored. It can be said that Whitman's unique concept of "pride" is a manifestation of his avid interest in the American character. The approach of Whitman derives from the American experiment, especially in a Jeffersonian sense. Jefferson makes interesting observations:

It is the manners and spirit of a people which preserve a republic in vigour. A degeneracy in these is a canker which soon eats to the heart of its laws and constitution.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵³ Whitman 1899, 57.

⁴⁵⁴ Jefferson 1907a, 230.

The quote contains two pieces of information on Jefferson's political philosophy. Firstly, "the manners and spirit of a people" are vital in the preservation of vigor in a republic. Secondly, and equally interesting, Jefferson sees a causal relationship between "the manners and spirit of a people" and system of government; the former is the cause, and the latter the symptom. In this sense, I propose that Whitman's emphasis of the American character over the system of government is Jeffersonian; Whitman's hard thinking on the American experiment impelled him to focus not on the symptom but on the cause. ⁴⁵⁵ The aforementioned Whitman's enterprise of the synthesis of three kinds of self-government with the uniting concept of "pride" – a vital constituent of the American character in his poetics – is to fulfill the spirit of the American experiment.

Matt Miller's study on "dilation" and "pride" in Whitman's poetics is the foundation of this chapter. Based on Miller's study, I develop my argument through the incorporation of various Whitman scholarships, especially political elements of Whitman. Thus, firstly, Miller's study on "dilation" and "pride" is reviewed in the next section.

1. The term "dilation" and "pride" in Whitman's poetics

This section centers on Millers' study on Whitman's concept of "dilation" and "pride"; Miller firstly investigates "dilation," and then based on the finding, he proceeds to examine "pride." Thus, this section proceeds in two stages; 1) Miller's analysis on "dilation" is recapitulated; 2) Miller's examination on Whitman's conflation of "dilation" with "pride" is reviewed. In the end of both subsections, I add my views on "dilation" and "pride" from the standpoint of the American experiment.

1.1 Whitman's dilation

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⁴⁵⁵ Section 3 of Chapter 2 of the dissertation touches on Whitman's "Moral revolution."

Miller notes that Whitman, in his poeticization, seeks to conceptualize "spinal theme" to "organize his various scattered drafts." While avoiding "artifice and convention," Whitman formulated the concept of "dilation" based on his central theme that "the body and the soul are harmonious coequals" Whitman writes, "I am the poet of the body, /And I am the poet of the soul." Miller states, "his choice of the word "dilation" as reference for spiritual expansiveness is involved in his efforts to define physical and spiritual equality," and thus calls "dilation" "a concept crucial to his spirituality, in both spiritual and physiological terms." In his reasoning, Miller makes a distinction between poet's personal dilation and interpersonal dilation:

"Song of Myself" begins with the assumption that the speaker has already experienced the kind of complete inclusion and becoming that the soul requires, and the work the poem would achieve is to help its audience become and include that which it names (or, put another way, to "assume" what the poet "assumes," beginning with the poet himself). 462

Whereas "The kind of complete inclusion and becoming that the soul requires" signifies personal "dilation," "to help its audience become and include that which it names" interpersonal "dilation." Together with what Whitman wrote in the process of composing the line "I dilate you with tremendous breath I buoy you up"⁴⁶³ in section 40 of "Song of Myself," Miller quotes from the Preface to *Leaves of Grass* 1855:

The greatest poet hardly knows pettiness or triviality. If he breathes into any thing that was before thought small it dilates with the grandeur and life of the universe. 464

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⁴⁵⁶ Miller 2010, 105.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., 105.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., 130.

⁴⁵⁹ Whitman 1959, 44.

⁴⁶⁰ Miller 2010, 131.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² Ibid., 143.

⁴⁶³ Miller 2010, 148, 150, 151; Whitman 1959, 71.

⁴⁶⁴ Miller 2010, 131, 147; Whitman 1959, 9.

By these quotes Miller illustrates the centrality of the concept of dilation – a spiritual expansion with an eye on the union of body and soul - in the poetics of Whitman. Here I propose to expand on Miller's analysis of dilation by putting it into the framework of the American experiment. Dilation – enlarging the self – denotes enlargement of the range of experimentation. 465 Indeed, what is examined in this subsection can be translated into the discourse of the American experiment: personal self-governing and self-government in poeticization. Whitman's experiment to union body and soul as well as self and others are couched in his experimental poeticization with the unconventional term "dilation" as the key.

1.2 Whitman's conflation of dilation with pride

Miller's examination moves on to Whitman's conflation of "dilation" with "pride." Miller quotes two passages. Firstly, he does so from section 21 of "Song of Myself":

I chant a new chant of dilation or pride,

We have had ducking and deprecating about enough,

I show that size is only development. 466

Miller asserts the conceptual importance of this passage by pointing out the proximity to a semantic core of "Song of Myself"; he states that "This key statement occurs in one of the crucial moments of the poem, following five lines after one of his most famous assertions [...], "I am the poet of the body, / And I am the poet of the soul." 467

Miller also quotes from "Our Old Feuillage" (originally titled number 4 of the "Chants Democratic"):

> Encircling all, vast-darting, up and wide, the American soul, with equal hemispheres — one Love, one Dilation or Pride. 468

⁴⁶⁸ Miller 2010, 158; Whitman 1965, 174.

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Henry S. Kariel, "The Applied Enlightenment?" (in Discussion) in *The Idea of America: A reassessment of* the American experiment, ed. E.M. Adams (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1977), 27.
466 Miller 2010, 153; Whitman 1959, 44-45.

⁴⁶⁷ Miller 2010, 153; Whitman 1959, 44.

Miller notes that the two quotes show that "dilation" and "pride" signifies the same thing: the aforementioned "spiritual expansion." About the first quote, Miller notes that:

This passage contributes a new element to our understanding of the process, for it is not just a "chant of dilation" but of "dilation or pride." [...] "Pride" does not supplement dilation; it is an alternative form of its presentation. 469

Miller also observes that there is a catch for "pride," which "is usually associated with a narrow egotism." Nevertheless, Miller argues that "his (Whitman's) conception of pride is expansive, not contractive" and, to reinforce his case, he quotes two additional passages: "the endless pride and outstretching of man" ("A Song for Occupations") and "the fullspread pride of man" ("I Sing the Body Electric").

Miller details the nature of "pride" and the two aspects of it:

He (Whitman) distinguishes an expansive understanding of pride from a narrow one that we might equate with mere vanity. [...] Pride for Whitman is interchangeable with the idea of spiritual expansion, because it is through a correct understanding of self-love — through "celebrating ourselves" — that we can begin to include others within us, allowing for a more direct and loving intercourse that is the origin of true poetic utterance and the kosmos engendered by it. 474

Miller maintains that the function of "pride" is the same as that of "dilation, and that pride, like dilation, can also be categorized into two types: personal pride – "a correct understanding of self-love" – and interpersonal pride – "inclusion of others within us, allowing for a more direct and loving intercourse."

Additionally, Miller refers to a Whitman's writing in his notebook:

And brings word that Dilation or Pride is a father of Causes,

⁴⁷¹ Ibid

⁴⁶⁹ Miller 2010, 154

Tbid.

⁴⁷² Miller 2010, 154; Whitman 1959, 90.

⁴⁷³ Miller 2010, 154; Whitman 1959, 120.

⁴⁷⁴ Miller 2010, 154.

And a mother of Causes is Goodness or Love.— 475

Miller states that ""Dilation" and "Pride" are presented interchangeably, as alternative words for the same cosmic force",476 and asserts that "Whitman's conflation of dilation and pride is a part of his ongoing effort to rescue pride as a positive and essential value in his new American cosmology."477 Here, I would like to argue that term "rescue pride as a positive and essential value" is not the best choice of words; the emphasis of the verb "rescue" is on the act itself, but the emphasis should be rather on "transmutation" of "pride as a positive and essential value." (I also argue that Miller's choice of "rescue" - rather a neutral term - is a reflection of his avoidance of politics in his study, which I will touch on later in more detail.) Dixon Wecter notes:

> According to the European romantics, pride and nobility are keynotes of the hero; he is aware of his superiority, of his divine right to lead. Whitman thus makes the only democratic transmutation of this pride which is possible, in identifying the heroic self with a group or cosmic egoism.478

Through his "democratic transmutation of pride," like the Founding Fathers, Whitman sought to efface "the distinction between ruler and ruled." In the above quote, Wecter states that Whitman's "democratic transmutation of pride" rests on the two processes. The first one is his identification with common people, and the other is adoption of a Transcendental idea of cosmic egoism. These two processes are interrelated. About cosmic egoism Lawrence Buell notes:

> the idea of the self as God means that the "I" is capable of the same infinite variety as nature and that every thought and act is (at least potentially) significant and holv. 480

⁴⁷⁵ Walt Whitman, "My Spirit sped back to." Available:

https://whitmanarchive.org/manuscripts/transcriptions/duk.00262.html

⁴⁷⁶ Miller 2010, 156. ⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., 157.

⁴⁷⁸ Dixon Wecter, "The Hero And The American Artist," The South Atlantic Quarterly vol. 41, no. 3 (July

Arendt 1963, 237.

⁴⁸⁰ Buell 1974, 324-325.

Unlike other Transcendentalists, Whitman pushed this cosmic egoism to the limit.⁴⁸¹ Whitman enacted it with intensity; I am divine and thus can be everyone, who is also divine. And thus Whitman could be identified with common people. In *Democratic Vistas*, Whitman recapitulates this "democratic transmutation of pride"; he states that "the idea of the pride and dignity of the common people [is] the life-blood of Democracy."

Like in subsection 1.1, I put "pride" in the context of the American experiment. While Whitman's effort to merge self and others via pride belongs to the experiment of personal self-governing, his rescue (transmutation) of pride relates to the experiment of self-government in poeticization as well as political self-government. Despite Miller's assertion that "dilation" and "pride" are interchangeable, it can be said that "dilation" concerns spiritual self-governing and self-government in poeticization, and that "pride" includes all the three kinds of self-government. (This observation makes sense; while Miller downplays the political aspects in the poetics of Whitman, this dissertation forefronts it.) In the next section, I attempt to narrow down the notion of Whitmanian pride; it is invigorating pride to continue the American experiment of self-government.

2. Whitman's enterprise to synthesize three kinds of self-government – personal self-governing, self-government in poeticization, and political self-government – with "pride" as the focal point

In the preface to *Leaves of Grass* 1855, Whitman wrote lines which Miller omits to quote but which are of vital importance in that they outline the synthesis of three kinds of self-government: 1) personal self-governing, 2) self-government in poeticization, and 3) political self-government. Whitman states:

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., 325.

⁴⁸² Whitman 1882, 225.

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 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. 483

The first and the second type of self-government – personal self-governing and self-government in poeticization – are explicit but the third one – political self-government – is implicit. The subject of the passage is "the greatest poet" and as such Whitman attaches special import to the soul's "pride," "which consists in never acknowledging any lessons but its own" yet, which go hand in hand with "sympathy" which functions as an intermediary with others. Thus, first of all, the passage portrays the first kind of self-governing with the articulation of distinction between the personal and the interpersonal realms. Secondly, Whitman applies this portrayal of self-government to his own poeticization by touching on "his style and thoughts" - the relation between form and content. It is readily understood that Whitman here refers to his free verse devoid of the literary conventions such as meter and rhyme. Yet, it is odd that Miller, who "look[s] at his writing process itself",484 and focuses on his poeticization, omits to quote this passage that would provide a good opportunity to expand on his argument since the passage covers both the spirituality and poeticization of Whitman. It seems that the passage is too suggestive of *political* self-government for Miller, who seeks to downplay the political elements in his study. (In it, the term "government" appears only once in the quote of the name of Whitman's notebook; the term "self-government" none. 485) Thus, as regards the third type of self-government – political self-government –, Miller's omission conversely indicates that it is also there.

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⁴⁸³ Whitman 1959, 12.

⁴⁸⁴ Miller 2010, xiii.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., 32.

Curiously, Betsy Erkkila, in her book *Whitman the Political Poet*, interprets the passage from the perspective of the politics of Whitman; her reading of it focuses on *political* self-government. Erkkila explicitly states that the passage of Whitman relates to political self-government, and, indeed, puts the passage at the center of her investigation of political Whitman. Employed five times, the phrase "pride and sympathy," becomes her main trope to express both "the separate person and the en masse" and "the one and many." Before Erkkila quotes the passage of Whitman – in the context of expanding role of the central government in the slavery issue –, she states:

As a Jeffersonian democrat, Whitman resisted the aggressive role assumed by the central government to hold the Union together. He celebrated the ideals of prudence and self-regulation, with the individual balanced between personal power and social love, as a kind of nineteenth-century poetic equivalent of the republican ideals of personal sacrifice and public virtue. The poet he imagines in the 1855 preface is, like his ideal republic, balanced between self and other:⁴⁸⁸

By this, Erkkila paves the way for bringing the political elements in the interpretation of the above passage of Whitman. Here, the term "Jeffersonian" in the first sentence indicates the general notion of Jeffersonian small government. *Importantly*, Erkkila links Whitman's "pride and sympathy" with "the republican ideals of personal sacrifice and public virtue" at the Founding. By this linkage, Erkkila puts Whitman's poetic enterprise in the larger framework of the American experiment of self-government. Yet, interestingly, to emphasize the politics of Whitman, Erkkila, on her part, omits to quote the first sentence in the passage of Whitman – "The greatest poet does not moralize or make applications of morals . . . he knows the soul." It seems to Erkkila that this upfront of "the greatest poet" obscures her point of *political* Whitman. But I would like to argue that the articulation of the subject – "The

⁴⁸⁶ Erkkila 1989, 95, 107.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., 94, 96, 111.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., 94

⁴⁸⁹ As shown in Introduction of the dissertation, Erkkila forefronts Jefferson's influence on Whitman, and thus her reference to Jefferson here is not abrupt.

greatest poet" – helps not to obscure but rather to *clarify* Whitman's politics; "The greatest poet" is the source from which all the aforementioned three types of self-government spring, including *political* self-government.

Indeed, the above passage of Whitman is a superb illustration of his synthesis of the three types of self-government – personal self-governing, self-government in poeticization, and political self-government, and it is the term pride that plays the central role here. Whitman's putting self-government in poeticization at the center is natural because Whitman chose poetry as his medium, and through his poeticization – "language experiment" –, he sought to set an example for the other two types – personal and political – of self-government. According to Richard Rorty, what Whitman wants to claim through his poetry is that America does not need to place itself within the old frame of reference, but creates a new frame of reference. Quoting a passage in the preface to *Leaves of Grass* 1855 – "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."

Whitman thought that we Americans have the most poetical nature because we are the first thoroughgoing experiment in national self-creation: the first nation-state with nobody but itself to please – not even God. We are the greatest poem because we put ourselves in the place of God: our essence is our existence, and our existence is in the future. 492

[...]

To say that the United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem is to say that America will create the taste by which it will be judged. It is to envisage our nation-state as both self-creating poet and self-created poem. 493

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⁴⁹⁰ Richard Rorty, *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997), 29.

⁴⁹¹ Whitman 1959, 5.

⁴⁹² Rorty 1997, 22.

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 29.

Whitman hoped that his self-government in the poeticization serves as a model for the other two kinds of self-government – personal and political –, and that he integrates all the three into a poetic synthesis. In so doing, Whitman had recourse to the American revolutionary legacy, the legacy of the American experiment. More specifically, Whitman could rely on a political precedent of Jefferson; in Brian Steele's words, "Government had to be tailored to fit the character of a people rather than any universal theory of man," which corresponds to "The greatest poet has lain close betwixt both and they are vital in his style and thoughts."

An experiment requires stepping out of old frame of reference – a reevaluation of the existing system and exploration into an uncharted field. Pride makes an experiment possible; it plays the vital role in supplying inspiration and vigor deriving from self-agency. In one of the aforementioned quotes related to "pride," Whitman laments, "We have had ducking and deprecating about enough." Unsatisfied, Whitman went back to the issue of the American experiment of self-government with the emphasis on individual self-agency. In so doing, Whitman resets the clock and starts from the moments of self-liberation, without which the import of self-government cannot be fully appreciated. Whitman's choice of poetry as his medium enables this; "Song of Myself" begins with "I celebrate myself", the sameness of the subject and object permits the celebration of self-liberation to be held right here and now.

Whitman seeks to remind the Americans that self-government is an unceasing experiment. And through the contrast between "dilation or pride" and "ducking and deprecating" in the aforementioned quote from "Song of Myself," Whitman seeks to show that pride is vital to the experiment. That Whitman makes such distinction manifests his inheritance of

⁴⁹⁴ Steele 2012, 107.

⁴⁹⁵ Rorty 1997 3

⁴⁹⁶ Whitman 1959, 25.

Jeffersonian legacy. When drawing a distinction between tory (=federalist) and whig (=republican), Jefferson states:

the sickly weakly, timid man fears the people, and is a tory by nature. the healthy strong and bold cherishes them, and is formed a whig by nature. 497

Only "the healthy strong and bold" – the one with invigorating pride – cherishes the people, and thus can pursue the experiment of self-government. Invigorating pride is the hallmark of republican self-government. Along with the aforementioned quote from Jefferson about vigor – "It is the manners and spirit of a people which preserve a republic in vigour" –, it follows that invigorating pride and the experiment of self-government are inseparable.

Whitman's forefronting of "The greatest poet" – his subordination of moral to the poetic soul – is interesting when compared with Jefferson's moral sense theory, which I touched on Introduction of Chapter 1. While Jefferson expanded the circle of those endowed with a moral sense from a chosen few to ordinary people in his application of Scottish moral philosophy to his political philosophy, ⁴⁹⁸ Whitman, with the introduction of the soul of "The greatest poet" which towers above moral, goes further than Jefferson in the democratic expansion. Crucially, the key here is the abovementioned Whitman's "democratic transmutation of pride." In other words, just as Jefferson decoupled moral from reason ⁴⁹⁹ – the old framework –, so Whitman sought to gain an independence from the wider old framework. Although Jefferson and Whitman tackled the same issue of republican self-government, they predicated their approach to it on the different sources – Jefferson on the moral sense and Whitman on the poetic soul. Yet the common premise of the enterprise of Jefferson and Whitman is invigorating pride.

⁴⁹⁷ Jefferson 1907f, 492.

⁴⁹⁸ Jefferson 1907b, 257.

⁴⁹⁹ Yarbrough 1998, 35.

Until the end Whitman held fast to his notion of pride. In "A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads," Whitman states:

Defiant of ostensible literary and other conventions, I avowedly chant "the great pride of man in himself," and permit it to be more or less a *motif* of nearly all my verse. I think this pride indispensable to an American. I think it not inconsistent with obedience, humility, deference, and self-questioning. (original emphasis)⁵⁰⁰

In Whitman's poetics, "conventions" and "pride" constitute contrastive elements; "pride" breaks with conventions, and in its stead experiments come in. In the face of various "conventions," Whitman had a distinctive idea of invigorating, self-assertive "pride," which is "not inconsistent with obedience, humility, deference, and self-questioning." Here we can detect the aforementioned phrase "pride and sympathy" in the Preface to *Leaves of Grass* 1855 running through Whitman's poetics. Whitman's poems revolve around this "pride" since it is "indispensable to an American," who is continuously involved in the experiment of self-government. Lastly, the 1856 letter to Emerson (which is in fact the preface to *Leaves of Grass* 1856⁵⁰¹) also helps us to understand the overall relation between Whitmanian pride and his poetic enterprise. Whitman states:

Such character, strong, limber, just, open-mouthed, American-blooded, full of *pride*, full of ease, of passionate friendliness, is to stand compact upon that vast basis of the supremacy of Individuality – that new moral American continent without which, I see, the physical continent remained incomplete, may-be a carcass, a bloat – that newer America, answering face to face with The States, with ever-satisfying and ever-unsurveyable seas and shores. ⁵⁰²

(emphasis mine)

Among others two important ideas central to Whitman's poetics are revealed here. The first one is that the American character, featured by invigorating pride, "stands compact on

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⁵⁰⁰ Whitman 1965, 571.

⁵⁰¹ Aspiz 1980, 244.

⁵⁰² Whitman 1965, 740-741.

vast basis of the supremacy of Individuality" which in turn becomes an integral part of "new moral American continent." The relation between such American character, individuality, and new moral American continent is expressly delineated. The other is that Whitman is aware of the American Revolutionary legacy, and assigns himself as an heir to it. Whitman makes a distinction between "the physical continent" and "new moral American continent," on which he, as a revolutionary poet, would work.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined Whitman's poetics with the attention to the term "pride" in the context of the American experiment of self-government. This chapter has shown that Whitman seeks to synthesize three kinds of self-government — personal self-governing, self-government in poeticization, and political self-government —, and that in that synthesis, self-government in poeticization is at the center with the term "pride" as a pivotal constituent. Invigorating pride is inseparable from the continuing American experiment of self-government. Whitman's putting self-government in terms of poeticization at the center is natural because Whitman chose poetry as his medium, and through his poeticization, he sought to set an example for the other two types — personal and political — of self-government. In overall Whitman's poetics — and more specifically in his synthesis of three kinds of self-government —, the term "pride" plays a vital role.

4. Whitmanian and Jeffersonian experience: "I Sing the Body Electric"	

Introduction

So far I have narrowed down the scope of my investigation; Chapter 1 is about Whitman's departure from party journalist over the slavery controversies; Chapter 2 his choice of poetry as his medium with the intention of perpetuating the American revolutionary spirit; Chapter 3 his choice of the American character as the subject matter of his poetry with the central concept "pride" in the context of the American experiment. This chapter investigates how he poeticizes the American character, and thus examines a specific poem – "I Sing the Body Electric" of in detail. As shown in Chapter 3, the poem contains the term "pride"; Whitman writes, "The fullspread pride of man." 504

I propose that Whitman poeticizes the American character through the rendition of various experiences of ordinary people. The forefront of the Americans' experiences suits a double feature of the American experiment. An experiment consists of new experiences, which in turn necessitates new language. Indeed, it can be said that Whitman's proceedings from Chapter 1 to this chapter reflect Whitman's acute awareness of the revolutionary origin of America, which was at the risk of disunion because of its declension from the spirit of the American experiment, which emphatically manifested in the form of the slavery controversies. In other words, when viewed from the perspective of the American experiment, Whitman's choice of his medium, his choice of the subject matter, and his way of poeticization of it cohere.

This chapter attempts to focus on Whitmanian experience in Jeffersonian context. As the previous chapter explored, Whitman's poetics lies in the synthesis of three kinds of self-government – personal self-governing, self-government in poeticization, and political self-government –, all of which in turn can be put under the rubric of the experience in the

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⁵⁰³ In *Leaves of Grass* 1855, all 12 poems are without the title, therefore for convenience I call the 5th poem "I Sing the Body Electric," the name Whitman attached to it from *Leaves of Grass* 1871.

Whitman 1959, 120.
Arendt 1963, 35.

American experiment: experience of personal, poetical, and political self-governing. It is those experiences that are subjectified in Whitman's poems.⁵⁰⁶

Among the twelve poems in *Leaves of Grass* 1855, "I Sing the Body Electric" stands out in various ways. First of all, Whitman directly addresses the slavery issues⁵⁰⁷; in the poem he exclaims "A slave at auction!" ⁵⁰⁸ Secondly, the form of the poem is remarkably experimental; Whitman portrays the American experience through the mere enumeration of body parts – the most basic and universal features of human being – of Whites, Blacks, Males, and Females. Thirdly, I propose that the poem has the salient flow from synchronic to diachronic experience, a framework of experience which this chapter introduces and principally concerns.

In the first section of this chapter, I attempt to put Whitmanian experience in Jeffersonian context, and in so doing I amplify the concept of Whitmanian experience. As the previous chapters explored, Jefferson and Whitman share the same theoretical background – faith in ordinary people – from which they developed their ideas. Furthermore, this chapter will show that experience of ordinary people matters much to both Whitman and Jefferson. Given that, I propose to create a typology that divides Whitmanian experience into two categories: synchronically shared experience and diachronically shared experience. Synchronically shared experience

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There are other ways to categorize Whitmanian experience: for instance, the dualism of material and spiritual experience, or of mythical and earthy experience, which I examine in other chapters of the dissertation. The dualism of material and spiritual experience is investigated in Chapter 3 and 5, and of mythical and earthy experience in Chapter 5 and 6.

⁵⁰⁷ Erkkila 1989, 125.

⁵⁰⁸ Whitman 1959, 121; "I Sing the Body Electric" 1855 is one of the instances in which Whitman expresses his egalitarianism most intensely. In the poem, as Erkkila (1989, 125) notes, "the body electric is also black." But, in Leaves of Grass 1856, Whitman reworded "A slave at auction!" into "A man's body at auction!" ("Poem of The given (the poem Body," name the in Leaves Grass https://whitmanarchive.org/published/LG/1856/poems/7) and thus neutralized the explicit criticism of slavery. Erkkila (1989, 240) also mentions "in the postwar period he no longer dreamed the egalitarian dream of "I Sing the Body Electric." [...] he was not fully prepared to integrate the black person into his vision of a free and equal America. [...] black people are absent from his poetry of the postwar years, and in his letters and journals of the time, blacks remain on the periphery of his vision as sources of dread and emblems of retribution."

on a sense of continuity with the past. Whitman's synchrony and diachrony of experience is portrayed through everyday experience, and from there, Jefferson's unique American experience of self-government surfaces. Investigating Whitman's works through the expanded perspective of experience – in the context of his relation with Jefferson – helps us to gain a new insight into them. In Section 2 of this chapter, I will show how this framework of two kinds of experience functions in Whitman's tackling of the slavery issue and the other paradoxes of America: the relation between the individual and the mass, as well as between states and federal government⁵⁰⁹

I add that Kerry McSweeney, while stressing the import of individual experience in his analysis of "There was a child went force," refers to synchrony and diachrony; he states, "The synchronic experience at the poem's conclusion recapitulates spatially the diachronic movement of the poem outward from the maternal environment to the external world." While my framework is concerned with poetic politics — with Jefferson's and Whitman's shared emphasis on the communal aspects of experience —, McSweeney focuses on personal aspects of experience. In other words, McSweeney's use of synchrony and diachrony is made in the context different from mine.

1. Whitmanian experience in Jeffersonian context: synchronically and diachronically shared experience

Both Whitman and Jefferson stress the importance of experience. On the one hand, Whitman calls his long poem "Poem of Pictures. Each verse presenting a picture of some characteristic scene, event, group, or personage – old or new, other countries or our own country," and as David S. Reynolds shows, Whitman's interest in pictures derives from their intensification of

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⁵⁰⁹ Reynolds 1995, 112.

⁵¹⁰ McSweeney 1998, 7.

⁵¹¹ Whitman 1899, 177.

common experience. ⁵¹² On the other hand, as Brian Steele points out, Jefferson unequivocally believed that "American social and historical experience (of self-government during the colonial era) had made a democratic American politics possible and proper," ⁵¹³ and demanded "continual cultivation and regeneration of that experience." ⁵¹⁴ In this way, the emphasis on the experience of ordinary people was shared by Jefferson – in his political philosophy – and Whitman – in his poetics. In putting an emphasis not only on ordinary people but also on their experiences, Whitman follows the footsteps of Jefferson.

The aforementioned typology of synchronically and diachronically shared experience provides a framework for the better understanding of Whitmanian experience. The former is about a contemporary solidarity, "fellow feeling," and the latter about a sense of continuity with the past. On the one hand, Reynolds illustrates the synchronically shared experience; "Whitman's emphasis on the common denominators of experience – the earth, sleep, work, sex, and the appetites – shows him trying to regain fundamental laws that are unarguable and sound, not shifting and unfair. [...] He is making a strident call for the unification of humankind on the basis of natural law that is part and parcel of shared interests and common experiences." On the other hand, Fred Somkin, referring to both Jefferson and Whitman, touches on diachronically shared experience; "For Jefferson the preservation of freedom required the reenactment by each generation of the original drama of republican creation. The maintenance of an 'out of the game' (section 4 of "Song of Myself") area permitted the people to act again as they had in the beginning. In their action together republican liberty would refind its nature, and the irreversibility of time would be denied." At the time of

⁵¹² Reynolds 1995, 285

⁵¹³ Steele 2012, 124.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., 132, 133.

⁵¹⁵ Reynolds 1995, 337.

Fred Somkin, *Unquiet Eagle; Memory and Desire in the Idea of American Freedom, 1815-1860.* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967), 83; This saying of Somkin corresponds to Jefferson's ward system and Whitman's choice of poetry as his medium which I detailed in Chapter 2 of the dissertation.

Whitman, as previously mentioned, this had more than a usual meaning; the sense of urgency of republican restoration was on his mind. As I have illustrated in the previous chapters, the signs of its degradation abounded at the time of Whitman's self-publishing of *Leaves of Grass* 1855.

In these two kinds of experience, there are parallels between Whitman's and Jefferson's thinking. In terms of synchronically shared experience, Jefferson's focus on the present is manifested in benevolence – doing good to others for the sake of own happiness⁵¹⁷ – and Whitman's focus on the present is manifested in the love of comrades. Whitman, in "For You O Democracy," writes, "I will plant companionship thick as trees along all the rivers of America, and along the shores of the great lakes, and all over the prairies." ⁵¹⁸ Both Whitman and Jefferson are of the same mind in their emphasis of the affectionate tie. Nevertheless, as regards diachronically shared experience, Jefferson's and Whitman's directions are opposite. Jefferson points to the future, given his faith in the capacity of ordinary people and their progress, ⁵¹⁹ while Whitman points to the past. It can be said that *Leaves of Grass* is a meeting point of Whitmanian and Jeffersonian experience, where readers re-experience the Founding spirit by forming contemporary solidarity on their own through common everyday experience. As previously mentioned in Introduction of this chapter, Leaves of Grass can be said to be about Whitman's awareness of America's deflection from the spirit of the Founding Fathers and his effort to fill the gap between the two. Additionally, Whitman needed to face the slavery issue of his own time, which came to be further complicated by the sectionalism between the North and the South than at the time of the Founding.

⁵¹⁷ Yarbrough 1998, 20; Vajda Zoltán, "On the visual dimension of sympathy in Thomas Jefferson's Moral Philosophy," *AMERICANA E-Journal of American Studies in Hungary* vol. 8, no.1 (Spring 2012): http://americanaejournal.hu/vol8no1/vajda.

⁵¹⁸ Whitman 1965, 117.

⁵¹⁹ Steele 2012, 308.

The essence of Jeffersonian experience – benevolence – is self-agency, not coercive but voluntary action based on liberty⁵²⁰, but, as Chapter 2 explored, the socio-political changes from an agrarian to an industrial society made it harder to have such an experience. Furthermore, the aforementioned sectionalization of the North and the South over the issue of slavery added difficulty in this respect. As Chapter 2 explored, Whitman, who viewed poetry as the best medium to re-experience and rekindle the Founding spirit, sought to help people to regain the sense of continuity with it. Through synchronic and diachronic experience, Whitman sought to restore Jeffersonian republicanism of self-government, and in its self-expression, the ordinary people would play the biggest role.

2. Whitman's Poetics influenced by Jeffersonian ideas: A Focus on "I Sing the Body Electric"

In this section, I forefront a mediation between textual and contextual reading of a text. As one of "the reasons for changing a textually oriented strategy of reading into a contextually oriented one," Ágnes Zsófia Kovács notes, "the notion of literature has come to become a cultural product within the framework of other cultural discourses like the human and social sciences." This section will show that the mediation between textual and contextual reading translates into a meeting point of Whitmanian poetics and Jeffersonian politics in the form of a specific poem.

When we attempt to find an appropriate poem in order to examine the validity of the framework of synchronic and diachronic experience, a caveat is called for; Jefferson was a materialist and disliked mysticism.⁵²³ Thus the need to find a poem without the influence of Whitman's mysticism puts a limitation on the choice of poem. For instance, "Song of

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⁵²⁰ Yarbrough 1998, 48.

⁵²¹ Ágnes Zsófia Kovács, *Literature in Context: Strategies of Reading American Novels* (Szeged: JATE Press Kiadó, 2010), 17.

⁵²² Ibid., 27.

⁵²³ Jefferson 1907f, 274.

Myself," though rich with both synchronic – "The blab of the pave" – and diachronic – "the vault at Mount Vernon" – experiences, is heavily colored by his mystical views like that of *Kosmos*; the validity of the framework becomes blurred. Given this, I have decided to focus on Whitman's poem "I Sing the Body Electric" in *Leaves of Grass* 1855, which has the salient flow from synchronic to diachronic experience.

Although Whitman uses the term "soul" in this poem, it plays a relatively small part in the formation of the overall tone. Huck Gutman states that "some critics have felt that it ("I Sing the Body Electric") is obvious and repetitive; others have found it lacking in the deeper mysteries characteristic of Whitman's major works." I argue that the poem is about the human body, with the message covering his political agenda of the unity of the nation, of the relationship between private and public, and of slavery. Erkkila remarks, "Whitman assumes an active political posture, attempting to uproot the contradictions in the body politic of America by addressing the reader directly." Furthermore, she adds that "Critics have tended to treat the poem as a fairly tedious enumeration of body parts, failing to note its ominous political prophecy and the fact that the body electric is also black."

Here I reconstrue this poem by applying the framework of Whitmanian synchronically and diachronically shared experience. These experiences are brought to the fore through corporeal tropes. In the opening, Whitman says:

The bodies of men and women engirth me, and I engirth them,
They will not let me off nor I them till I go with them and respond to
them and love them. 529

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⁵²⁴ Whitman 1959, 31.

⁵²⁵ Ibid., 67

⁵²⁶ Huck Gutman, ""I Sing the Body Electric" 1855" *In Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia*, eds. J.R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 296.

⁵²⁷ Erkkila 1989, 125.

⁵²⁸ Ibid.

⁵²⁹ Whitman 1959, 116.

There is something in staying close to men and women and looking on them and in the contact and odor of them that pleases the soul well,

All things please the soul, but these please the soul well. 530

"The bodies of men and women engirth me, and I engirth them" and "the contact and odor" signify the proximity of human contact with nothing in between. In this way, Whitmanian synchronically shared experience, a contemporary sense of fraternity, mostly starts from sensation through the basic senses – hearing, sight, touch, and smell. The inclusion of the senses which tend to be downplayed both in our life and in literary representations – touch and smell – amplifies the tone of egalitarianism of this poem.

After admitting "The expression of the body of man or woman balks account," Whitman says:

The expression of a wellmade [sic] man appears not only in his face,

It is in his limbs and joints also it is curiously in the joints of his hips and wrists,

It is in his walk .. the carriage of his neck .. the flex of his waist and knees *dress* does not hide him, ⁵³¹

(emphasis mine)

Through the trope of the human body, Whitman signifies three layers of meaning – the commonality of body, the relationship between the private and the public sphere, and the harmony between Federal government and States. Firstly, Whitman forefronts the human body as the unarguable commonality of all people. (Here pronouns are male, but the context allows us to understand them as general, non-gendered ones.) All people, regardless of race, class, and sex, have body parts in common. Secondly, in the public realm, the face is the only part fully exposed. It plays a synecdochical role; we recognize others mainly through visual perception of their faces. The other parts – limbs, joints, hips, wrists, neck, waist, and knees – are also the commonality of all people, yet hidden under the "dress," viewed as belonging to

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⁵³⁰ Ibid., 119.

⁵³¹ Ibid., 116.

the private realm. But through their enumeration by Whitman, the body parts, other than face, go public. Thus, Whitman attains the harmony between the public and the private realm through the corporeal tropes. Thirdly, Whitman portrays all the body parts as if they were autonomous entities, and also functioning as a whole. Here the parallel can be drawn between the relationship between each body part and the whole and each state and Federal government; Whitman states that "The union of the parts of the body is not more necessary to their life than the union of These States is to their life." Whitman sheds light on what we tend to overlook in our life, especially when we pay too much attention to our differences, like in the increased sectionalization between the North and the South before the Civil War. In the above quotes, Whitman, by keeping delicate balance, succeeds in confirming the commonality of people, without sacrificing their individuality. In the process, what the human body represents turns into a sense of fraternity, with the individuality intact.

So far Whitman has not made it clear about whose body he is talking about, but he starts to be more specific:

The man's body is sacred and the woman's body is sacred it is no matter who,

Is it a slave? Is it one of the dullfaced immigrants just landed on the wharf?

Each belongs here or anywhere just as much as the welloff just as much as you,

Each has his or her place in the procession. 533

On the surface, Whitman continues his discourse of human body, which I argue, is in fact the discourse of the body politic of America. The two sayings of Whitman enable this interpretation. Firstly, as previously quoted, Whitman states that "The union of the parts of the body is not more necessary to their life than the union of These States is to their life."

⁵³² Whitman 1965, 735.

⁵³³ Whitman 1959, 120.

⁵³⁴ Whitman 1965, 735.

Secondly, Whitman also remarks that "the bond of union of these States" [is] "sacred." 535

The two sayings of Whitman concur to translate "body" into "union."

Whitman incorporates slave and immigrants into the subject of body, whom he considers, also are entitled to join. Whitman's body politic of America envelops slaves and immigrants. From there, Whitman embarks on his exploration of the issue of slavery. After calling into the question of the inferiority of Blacks – "Do you know so much that you call the slave or the dullfaced ignorant?" ⁵³⁶ – Whitman switches to the topic of a slave auction, and says:

A slave at auction!

I help the auctioneer the sloven does not half know his business.

Gentlemen look on this curious creature,

Whatever the bids of the bidders they cannot be high enough for him,

[...]

Examine these limbs, red black or white they are very cunning in tendon and nerve;

They shall be stript that you may see them.

Exquisite senses, lifelit eyes, pluck, volition,

Flakes of breastmuscle, pliant backbone and neck, flesh not flabby, goodsized arms and legs,

And wonders within there yet. 537

(emphasis mine)

As Jay Grossman notes, Whitman appropriates the role of the auctioneer through the interpellation "Gentlemen." At first, as auctioneer, Whitman plays up the body of the human chattel as a sales promotion. Yet, in the process, what started as a sales-pitch turns into something else. Engrossed in his own words, Whitman seems to forget his role as an auctioneer and changes sides. As the next part of the poem will show later, Whitman's sales pitch extends to a larger discourse related to the humanity of slave. Here Whitman gives the

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⁵³⁵ Whitman 2003, 206.

⁵³⁶ Whitman 1959, 121.

⁵³⁷ Ibid.

Jay Grossman, Reconstituting the American Renaissance: Emerson, Whitman, and the Politics of Representation (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 183.

negative answer to the question of the inferiority of blacks, and calls them priceless. By enumerating the body parts of the blacks as he did in the preceding section of the poem and, furthermore, by putting them in a positive light, Whitman extends his fraternity to them.

It is in this heightened emotional state that Whitman begins to portray diachronic experience, a sense of continuity with the past:

Within there runs *his* blood the same old blood .. the same red running blood;

There swells and jets his heart There all passions and desires .. all reachings and aspirations:

Do you think they are not there because they are not expressed in parlors and lecture-rooms?

This is not only one man he is the father of those who shall be fathers in their turns.

In him the start of populous states and rich republics,

Of him countless immortal lives with countless embodiments and enjoyments.⁵³⁹

(emphasis mine)

After formulating the synchronic experience by the portrayal of human body, it is the diachronic experience that is forefronted. Here the blood is like the eternal red-colored river flowing between past, present, and future. The vital question in investigating this part is "whose blood does run?" Grammatically speaking, the referent of "him" is a slave put on the block. If so, it can be said that Whitman includes blacks in "the start of populous states and rich republics," tallying with Erkkila's interpretation that "the body electric is also black." ⁵⁴⁰ If not so – if the poet refers to a *general he*, without identifying him, the meaning would be more general. Here, the key is the sentence "Do you think they are not there because they are not expressed in parlors and lecture-rooms?." Whitman acknowledges that his opinion is

⁵³⁹ Whitman 1959, 121-122.

⁵⁴⁰ Erkkila 1989, 125.

against the conventional wisdom, connoting that *he* is a slave. The grammatical analysis of *he* and this rhetorical question concur to support this line of thought. This is sensational; there is a retroactively effective bond between whites and blacks.

Whitman goes on to the subject of "A woman at auction!" The pair of "A slave at auction!" and "A woman at auction!" suggests that "A woman" is "a female slave." Yet, I propose that a wider discourse of the gender equality is hidden here, given that this part also has an element of the diachronic experience as the part of "A slave at auction!" does.

A woman at auction!

She too is not only herself she is the teeming mother of mothers, She is the bearer of them that shall grow and be mates to the mothers.

Her daughters or their daughters' daughters .. who knows who shall mate with them?

Who knows through the centuries what heroes may come from them?

In them and of them natal love in them the divine mystery the same old beautiful mystery.⁵⁴²

It is noticeable that the tone of this part, spanning from past, present, to future, is full of potentialities, including that of "heroes" and "mystery." This part is a paraphrase of the line "In him (a slave) the start of populous states and rich republics"; the generational relationship expressed here relates to the same relationship indicated by *blood* in the former section of the poem. Furthermore, in "Song of Myself," Whitman writes:

I am the poet of the woman the same as the man,
And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man,
And I say there is nothing greater than the mother of men.⁵⁴³

This egalitarian view of Whitman between the genders helps us infer that in referring to "A woman at auction," Whitman *also* addresses the broader issue of the females' social status

⁵⁴² Whitman 1959, 122.

⁵⁴¹ Gutman 1998, 297.

⁵⁴³ Ibid., 44.

at the time. Whitman demands that the relationship between male and female be more egalitarian.

In the closing part, Whitman writes:

Who degrades or defiles the living human body is cursed,

Who degrades or defiles the body of the dead is not more cursed.⁵⁴⁴

Here, "the living human body" represents the medium of synchronically shared experience, and "the body of the dead" the diachronically shared experience. This interpretation would be strengthened if both of "the body" were translated into "the body politic of America," which the aforementioned quotes of Whitman highly suggest. "The living human body" refers to the current status of America, and "the body of the dead" to the Founding Fathers. The antonym of "cursed" is "sacred," and as previously mentioned, Whitman views "the bond of union of these States" as "sacred." "Whitman asserts that the union of nation is being "cursed." "Degrading or defiling" those "bodies" stands for a double betrayal: the ongoing failure in Republican experiment, which in turn desecrates the Founding Fathers.

In this analysis of "I Sing the Body Electric," I have aimed to show the validity of the framework of synchronically and diachronically shared experience, where the purely descriptive of everyday experience turns into the normative of the Founding Fathers.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that in *Leaves of Grass* 1855, Whitman single-mindedly pursued his poetic goal of uniting a then fragmented America so that the American experiment could continue. For him, writing and self-publishing his poems was his revolutionary service. In his intensification of common experience, Whitman sought to portray synchronically shared

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., 123.

⁵⁴⁵ Whitman 2003, 206.

experience – contemporary solidarity – and diachronically shared experience – the continuity with the Founding spirit. This chapter has shown that the framework enable us to delve deeper into the textual analysis, where otherwise the presences of catalogue and parallelism are merely noticed. In the case of "I Sing the Body Electric," the purely descriptive presentation – the enumeration of body parts – encloses layers of meaning through the process of those parts going public by the act of enumeration.

Although there are few references to Jefferson in Whitman's poems, recognizing the parallel between the currents of thought of Whitman and Jefferson can be called one of the foundations for understanding Whitman: Whitman's poetics – through common, everyday experience solidarity is felt, and eventually the Founding spirit is re-experienced – and Jefferson's political philosophy – the unique American experience of self-government enables its Republicanism. It is with this parallelism that we can better appreciate Whitman's works, especially his emphasis on experience and bodily expression.

In Part 3, the main theme of the dissertation shifts from politics to poetics – from Jeffersonian Whitman to Whitman's olfactory tropes. Yet, the theme of experience remains at the center of the dissertation; Whitmanian experience in Part 3 is Whitmanian experience in Part 1 and 2 in disguise. In Part 3, Whitmanian experience will be put in a different light, with the emphasis on form of his poems, more specifically Whitman's olfactory tropes. Chapter 5 investigates Whitman's conflation of poetics and politics, and how the two kinds of experience – sensuous and affective experience – interact in Whitman's (poetic) epistemology. Chapter 6 examines the beginning of "Song of Myself" from the perspective of form – his olfactory tropes –, which in fact signify Whitmanian dilation and pride in Chapter 3.

PART 3: --- WHITMAN'S OLFACTORY TROPES: poetic vehicle for self-government

5. "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" and "Locations and Times": Whitman's olfaction-centered thinking in his poetics and epistemology

Introduction

Textually speaking, it is hard to substantiate the influence of Jefferson on Whitman. In *Leaves of Grass*, there is only one poem which bears explicitly the name of Jefferson.⁵⁴⁶ Yet, speaking of the expression of Jeffersonian self-government, there is another poem which can be a support for Jefferson's influence on Whitman. The poem is "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" which bears lines that read like the doctrine of Jeffersonian self-government – "Those that go their own gait, erect, stepping with freedom and command, leading not following." ⁵⁴⁷ Jefferson valued self-agency, not coercive, but voluntary action based on liberty. ⁵⁴⁸

"The Prairie-Grass Dividing" is a canonized piece in the criticism of Whitman.⁵⁴⁹ Ed Folsom's "Walt Whitman's Prairie Paradise" covers extensively Whitman's sayings on the Prairie – some of which this chapter also quotes – and provides us with a superb analysis of the poem with his eye on the significance of the Prairie to Whitman.⁵⁵⁰ The poem is about the correspondence; Whitman writes, "I demand of it the spiritual corresponding."⁵⁵¹ It is between what Whitman calls "physical conscience"⁵⁵² – "The prairie-grass dividing, its special odor breathing,"⁵⁵³ – and "the moral and spiritual conscience"⁵⁵⁴ – "a *new* democratic speech, a *new* democratic way of behaving, a *new* democratic way of being"⁵⁵⁵ in Folsom's words. (emphasis mine)

This chapter investigates Whitman's thinking – his poetics and epistemology – through the study of the two poems – "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" and "Locations and Times."

⁵⁴⁶ Whitman 1965, 517. In the poem titled *Election Day, November, 1884*, Whitman said, "These stormy gusts and winds waft precious ships, / Swell'd Washington's, Jefferson's, Lincoln's sails." ⁵⁴⁷ Ibid., 129.

⁵⁴⁸ Yarbrough 1998, 48.

⁵⁴⁹ Steven P. Schneider, ""Prairie-Grass Dividing, The" (1860)" in *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia*, eds. J.R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 539.

⁵⁵⁰ Ed Folsom, "Walt Whitman's Prairie Paradise" in *Recovering the Prairie*, ed. Robert F. Sayre (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 47-60.

⁵⁵¹ Whitman 1965, 129.

⁵⁵² Whitman 1882, 250.

⁵⁵³ Whitman 1965, 129.

⁵⁵⁴ Whitman 1882, 250.

⁵⁵⁵ Folsom 1999, 49.

Compared with well-known "The Prairie-Grass Dividing," "Locations and Times" is a short poem so minor that *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia* omits mentioning it. 556 But the two poems have something in common; they are the only two poems in the deathbed edition of *Leaves of Grass* which explicitly bear the term "correspond," and which also happen to bear the term "odor." While it has been noted that, in Whitman's poems, the five senses play an "important role in comprehending or achieving the spiritual," this chapter specifically focuses on the roles olfaction plays in his poetics and epistemology. In the first and second section of this chapter, drawing on the studies of Richard A. Law and Matt Miller, I propose that Whitman's poetics consists of dilation-respiration-olfaction scheme. In the third section of this chapter, drawing upon the study of Marion Harris, I propose that olfaction plays the vital role in his epistemological correspondence between the spiritual and the material. Through these, this chapter aims to show Whitman's olfaction-centered thinking.

Thus, this chapter is more concerned with Whitman's poetics than with his politics, including the influence of Jefferson on Whitman. Yet, I would like to argue that what Folsom portrays as "a *new* democratic speech, a *new* democratic way of behaving, a *new* democratic way of being" is not *new* but dates back to the Founding era. The character of "Those of inland America" portrayed in "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" is Whitman's cultural translation of the political philosophy in Jefferson's *Declaration of Independence*. "Well said," Jefferson would exclaim, who stated "It is the manners and spirit of a people which preserve a republic in vigour." ⁵⁵⁹ Indeed, the poem corresponds to such vigor, and epitomizes Whitman's concept of "pride," which Chapter 3 has examined. The undertone of the

⁵⁵⁶ Cf. the index of *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia*, eds. J.R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 842.

⁵⁵⁷ Miller 1957, 77.

⁵⁵⁸ Folsom's usage of "new" may be proper. The notion of self-government dates back to the Founding era, but its poetic realization in the character of "Those of inland America" is "new." Still, the realization can be viewed as the *restoration* of the old ideal, and in this case, it is not "new." ⁵⁵⁹ Jefferson 1907a, 230.

American experiment Whitman rendered in the poem induces Folsom to emphatically employ the adjective *new*.

In the Founding era, the expansion of territory was far from the consensus;⁵⁶⁰ the conventional wisdom on the relation between the viability of republicanism and the size of a nation was inimical to the expansion, as Chapter 1 explored.⁵⁶¹ The Federalists were more interested in consolidation of the authority than in the expansion.⁵⁶² For Jefferson, this creed of the Federalists was the bane of Britain, and would be the same to the U.S.⁵⁶³ Jefferson, whose political economy centered around agriculture,⁵⁶⁴ took the initiative in the Northwest Ordinance and the Louisiana Purchase,⁵⁶⁵ through which the West, the Prairie lands, were acquired.

Contrary to the Federalists, Jefferson was optimistic in the spread of republican self-government in the two expanded territories. ⁵⁶⁶ Jefferson, in *Report of a Plan of Government for the Western Territory 1784*, helped to establish a principle that new states would be "admitted into the union on an equal footing with the original states." ⁵⁶⁷ It is Jefferson who hoped and enabled "the spirit of '76" to be re-enacted in the Prairie lands. ⁵⁶⁸ All of these involvements of Jefferson constitute a Jeffersonian context for "The Prairie-Grass Dividing," which makes more meaningful Whitman's portrayal of the Prairie land as the paragon of the American self-government. It can be said that "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" is a singular meeting point of Whitman and Jefferson's ideas.

Onuf 2000, 55-56.

Montesquieu 1897, 40. Montesquieu states that "They (republics) cannot take place but in a small state."

⁵⁶² Onuf 2000, 56.

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁴ Jefferson 1907a, 229.

⁵⁶⁵ Joni L. Kinsey, Rebecca Roberts, and Robert F. Sayre, "Prairie Prospects: The Aesthetics Plainness," in *Recovering the Prairie*, ed. Robert F. Sayre (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 27.

Onuf 1987, 7; Steele 2012, 99-100.

⁵⁶⁷ Jefferson 1952, 604.

⁵⁶⁸ Somkin 1967, 83.

I also argue that "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" is "Song of Myself" transplanted on the West. While the subject matter of *Leaves of Grass* shifted from all the U.S. regions to the West, ⁵⁶⁹ the prototype in "Song of Myself" 1855 takes the more specific form; "summer grass" of an unidentified location comes to be "The Prairie-Grass." "The open air" turns into "The prairie-grass's special odor." Importantly, not only the location but also the medium are more specified. What is breathed is "The prairie-grass's special *odor*" – not "The prairie-grass's special *air*." In the next section, I propose a new scheme – dilation-respiration-olfaction scheme – to sort out various related notions.

1. Whitman's poetics: dilation, respiration, olfaction

This section begins with Richard A. Law's essay "The respiration motif in "Song of Myself." Law maintains that the respiration motif plays the key role in Whitman's "twofold lifework of personally assimilating and diffusing all existence." Law states:

To articulate the 'mystical interpenetration of the Self with all life and experience,' Whitman represents the human organism in its continuous physiological and psychological processes constantly stimulated by and responding to its environment. It is appropriate that the first image pattern in 'Song of Myself' is that of respiration, because among the life processes of an organism respiration is primary. [...] Respiration intimately unites the organism and its environment in their continuous exchange of gases. In the human being the critical center of exchange is the lungs, [...] These principles of respiration underlie the imagery in sections 1 and 2 of 'Song of Myself' and are image referents in other sections of the poem.⁵⁷³

⁵⁶⁹ Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1950), 44-45.

⁵⁷⁰ Whitman 1959, 25.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid., 33, 82.

⁵⁷² Law 1964, 92.

⁵⁷³ Ibid., 92-93.

Law considers that there are two types of the respiration motif. The first one, which is explicated in the above quote, is the interpenetration between Whitman and his surroundings where the lungs serve as a critical center in the connection process. Apart from this, Law also calls attention to another type of the respiration motif. He remarks the line "I dilate you with tremendous breath, I buoy you up" so one of the examples of "the poet's mystical service [...] of nourishing or sustaining mankind with all that he ultimately absorbs."

At this point, I would like to add that Law deals solely with "Song of Myself," and in this chapter I aim to expand the respiration framework to be applicable to other poems of Whitman. First of all, I propose to make a distinction within the respiration motif between the interpenetration within an individual consciousness – Law's first type – and the communal intersubjectivity – Law's second type. For instance, the phrase:

My respiration and inspiration the beating of my heart the passing of blood and air through my lungs, ⁵⁷⁶

is about the interpenetration within an individual consciousness, whereas

I dilate you with tremendous breath I buoy you up;⁵⁷⁷

is about the communal intersubjectivity.⁵⁷⁸ The object "you" shows that there is an interrelation between Whitman and that "you" and they both have their own subjectivity.

In this respect, revisiting Matt Miller's study on Whitman's concept of "dilation," which Chapter 3 explored, is profitable. Miller defines the dilation as "reference for spiritual expansiveness" as well as "a concept crucial to his (Whitman's) spirituality, in both spiritual and physiological terms." ⁵⁸⁰ Law's wording of "personally assimilating and

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⁵⁷⁴ Whitman 1959, 71.

⁵⁷⁵ Law 1964, 93.

⁵⁷⁶ Whitman 1959, 25.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., 71.

⁵⁷⁸ In a broader sense, Whitman seeks to attain "communal intersubjectivity" through his poetry. Here, I mean "communal intersubjectivity" in a narrower sense, which is in contrast with the "interpenetration within an individual consciousness."

⁵⁷⁹ Miller 2010, 131.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

diffusing all existence" signifies the same thing as Miller's wording of "spiritual expansiveness."

In his reasoning, Miller, like I did above in respiration motif, makes a distinction between the poet's personal dilation – the interpenetration within an individual consciousness – and interpersonal dilation – the communal intersubjectivity:

"Song of Myself" begins with the assumption that the speaker has already experienced the kind of complete inclusion and becoming that the soul requires, and the work the poem would achieve is to help its audience become and include that which it names (or, put another way, to "assume" what the poet "assumes," beginning with the poet himself). ⁵⁸¹

Dilation signifies "the kind of complete inclusion and becoming that the soul requires." Miller differentiates the poet's personal dilation from interpersonal dilation between the poet and his readers. Together with the line "I dilate you with tremendous breath I buoy you up," Miller quotes from the Preface to *Leaves of Grass* 1855:

The greatest poet hardly knows pettiness or triviality. If he breathes into any thing that was before thought small it dilates with the grandeur and life of the universe.⁵⁸³

In these quotes, Miller illustrates the centrality of the concept of dilation in Whitman's poetics. Miller points out the key role which breath plays in the context of physiological and spiritual dilation, yet does not touch on breath per se. From my standpoint, both Miller and Law explore the overlapping field in Whitman's poetics on different levels; Miller explores the level of concept whereas Law explores the level of physiology. And I would also like to argue that both Miller and Law both miss another dimension: the level of sense.⁵⁸⁴ *Olfaction*

⁵⁸¹ Ibid., 143.

⁵⁸² Whitman 1959, 71.

⁵⁸³ Miller 2010, 131, 147; Whitman 1959, 9.

For instance, Law misinterprets Whitman's olfactory tropes. Law states that "Section 2 begins with Whitman's rejection of 'Houses and rooms ... full of perfumes,' i. e., society or civilization and its intoxicating fragrance from which there is no nourishment." (93) But I argue that the meaning of "fragrance" here is positive (I breathe the fragrance myself, and know it and like it). "Perfume" and "fragrance" constitute the mutual opposite; "perfume" is used to illustrate something negative, and "fragrance" positive. This distinction is vital to

is the sense most closely related to respiration. In his self-review, Whitman notes that "he makes audacious and native use of his own body and soul. He must re-create poetry with the elements always at hand." Sensuous experiences are "the elements always at hand," and Whitman's frequent employment of corporeal tropes indicates that the experience of dilation is universal, not limited to some chosen people. This is the key tenet of Whitman's poetics, and thus the inclusion of the level of sense – olfaction – in the appreciation of the levels of concept and physiology is indispensable. Here, I propose to create a scheme to sort out the interplay among the different levels of concept, physiology, and sense, and to call it "dilation-respiration-olfaction scheme." My inclusion olfaction into this scheme is borne out by Whitman's own inclination related to the five senses and the features of odor experience.

Firstly, Whitman is said to have had a keen sense of smell. Whitman states: there is a scent to everything, even the snow, if you can only detect it – no two places, hardly any two hours, anywhere, exactly alike. How different the odor of noon from midnight, or winter from summer, or a windy spell from a still one. 587

Whitman's sensitivity to smell is such that olfaction can be said to be an integral part of "the elements always at hand." The mediation of these three levels – concept (dilation), physiology (respiration), and sense (olfaction) – shows the interplay of the similar ideas at different levels; for instance, "interpenetration" corresponds to "personal dilation," and "communal subjectivity" to "interpersonal dilation."

With respect to the features of odor experience, olfaction is the sense of temporal and perceptual liminality and inter-subjectivity, these characteristics being crucial to the concept of both personal and interpersonal dilation. Firstly as regards olfaction's temporal and perceptual liminality, Alfred Gell in "Magic, Perfume, Dream," notes:

the proper understanding of Section 2 of "Song of Myself," which I will touch on later in this chapter and the next one.

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⁵⁸⁵ Whitman 1855, 205-212.

⁵⁸⁶ John Bailey, Walt Whitman (London: Macmillan and Co, 1926), 211.

⁵⁸⁷ Whitman 1882, 159.

The smell of something cooking or the tang of an aperitif mark a transition from concept, expectation, to fact—a notional meal to the actual one—and conversely the standard and familiar postprandial aromatics, nuts, cheeses, coffee and cigars set a seal of finality on the dematerialisation of a meal, now only an insubstantial trace. A mere aroma, in its very lack of substance is more like a concept than it is like a "thing" in the usual sense, and it is really quite appropriate that the olfactory sense should play its greatest role at junctures when it is precisely this attribute of a meal (meal-concept or meal-fact) which is in the balance. ⁵⁸⁸

David Howes in "Olfaction and Transition," states:

As Gell's analysis suggests, the sense of smell is the liminal sense par excellence, constitutive of and at the same time operative across all of the boundaries we draw between different realms and categories of experience. 589

Indeed, olfaction's liminality can be said to be the pillar of the concept of personal dilation or interpenetration. Among the five senses, the sense of smell is the best to portray expansive spirituality.

Secondly, in respect of interpersonal dilation or inter-subjectivity, olfaction has played a vital role in human history, especially, in "mystical service." Howes states:

it will be recalled that de Montaigne saw the purpose behind the use of incense and perfume in churches as being to 'fit us for contemplation,' presumably of God. [...] the burning of incense creates an 'intersubjective we-feeling' among the participants in a rite as each is forced to introject particles of the odour. One cannot not participate in the effervescence (or fellow-feeling) of the situation, because it participates in you. What is more, the use of incense 'provides for the senses a symbolic representation of the invisible action (communion) that is taking place'... ⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁸ Alfred Gell, "Magic, Perfume, Dream" in *Symbols and Sentiments: Cross-cultural Studies in Symbolism*, ed. Ioan Lewis (London: Academic Press, 1977), 28.

⁵⁸⁹ Howes 1991, 131-132.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid., 133-134.

Incense and perfume in churches are indispensable in the creation of the "intersubjective we-feeling." Likewise, in the poetics of Whitman, the sense of smell is the mainstay to actualize communal intersubjectivity or interpersonal dilation. For instance, this feature of olfaction is the undertone in the phrase "The prairie-grass dividing, its special odor breathing," which signifies interpersonal dilation (as well as personal dilation). Through "the elements always at hand," Whitman seeks to create intersubjective we-feeling different from the one experienced in church. Whitman notes that, "there will soon be no more priests. Their work is done." Instead, Whitman asserts, "a new order shall arise and they shall be the priests of man, and every man shall be his own priest." It is through the employment of commonplace olfactory tropes that Whitman demonstrates the universality of the experience of personal and interpersonal dilation.

As Miller notes, personal dilation and interpersonal dilation go hand in hand. Both in "Song of Myself" and "The Prairie-Grass Dividing," Whitman first experiences his own dilation and then brings about interpersonal dilation. The difference is that "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" bears "prairie-grass's special odor," which is more specific and more suggestive of the concept of dilation than rather than the symbolic "the open air" in "Song of Myself."

In Section 5 of Introduction, I have proposed to conflate Whitmanian pride with his olfactory tropes through the notion of "odor experience peculiar to Whitman," in which body odor is vivifying, and an odor can be something special. Whitman's olfactory tropes are the vehicle for invigorating pride to continue the American experiment. Here, I would like to explicate the link between Whitman's politics and poetics via the aforementioned dilation-respiration-olfaction scheme.

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⁵⁹¹ Whitman 1959, 22.

⁵⁹² Ibid

In Introduction of this chapter, calling "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" the epitome of Whitman's concept of "pride," I have referred to the political aspect of "The Prairie-Grass Dividing": the elements of Jeffersonian self-government. Here revisiting "pride" in Chapter 3 helps to put dilation-respiration-olfaction scheme into a different light. As Miller notes, pride is the equivalent of dilation in the language of Whitman. (And I have added the political element to Miller's notion of Whitmanian pride.) Thus, through the paraphrase of dilation into pride, dilation-respiration-olfaction scheme turns into *pride*-respiration-olfaction scheme. This modified scheme occasions a new perspective; pride is linked with olfaction as in the notion of "odor experience peculiar to Whitman." With all of these, the next section analyses in detail the poem "The Prairie-Grass Dividing."

2. "The Prairie-Grass Dividing": "Song of Myself" transplanted on the West

In "The Prairie-Grass Dividing," communal intersubjectivity or interpersonal dilation is at the forefront. The fact that Whitman uses the verb "demand" three times shows that the focal point is not within Whitman's own subjectivity. The theme of the poem is to attain an interpersonal dilation or intersubjectivity between Whitman and "Those of inland America" through the rite of "breathing the prairie-grass's special odor." Whitman later states that the American character "shall again directly be vitalized by [...] the strong air of prairie." (The term "again" suggests that the American character's vitality had been lost in the meantime.) From the three versions of the poem – 1860 manuscript, 1860 the first appearance version, and 1867 the final version –, I have chosen the final one 594:

The prairie-grass dividing, its special odor breathing, I demand of it the spiritual corresponding,

⁵⁹³ Whitman 1882, 283.

Walt Whitman, *Whitman's Manuscripts: Leaves of Grass (1860); A PARALELL TEXT*, ed. Fredson Bowers (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955), 106 (Manuscript), Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (Boston: Thayer and Eldridge, 1860-61), 368 (The first appearance), Whitman 1965, 129. (The final version)

Demand the most copious and close companionship of men,

Demand the blades to rise of words, acts, beings,

Those of the open atmosphere, coarse, sunlit, fresh, nutritious,

Those that go their own gait, erect, stepping with freedom and command, leading not following,

Those with a never-quell'd audacity, those with sweet and lusty flesh clear of taint,

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

Those of earth-born passion, simple, never constrain'd, never obedient,

Those of inland America. 595

The first line poses a question: "what does "The prairie-grass" divide?" Although the overall tone of the poem suggests that the term "divide" signifies "expansion" – *dividing* and multiplying –, I argue that the comparison of the three different versions of the poem reveals something different. Indeed, there are three stages in the development of the poem, namely, (1) the manuscript is without the first line of the final version; (2) the first appearance version has the first line but the phrasing is a little different – the term "own" is used instead of "special" –, and (3) the first line with the term "special" in the final version. A close look provides us with the key to the meaning of "dividing."

Firstly, Fredson Bowers' the manuscript of "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" in *Whitman's Manuscripts: Leaves of Grass (1860)* shows that, among others, there are two crucial differences between the final form of the poem and the manuscript. The first difference concerns the title of the poem; the title of the manuscript is "Prairie-Grass" – *without the term "dividing."* The other is that the manuscript starts with the second line of the final version of the poem; the manuscript starts with the phrase "I demand the spiritual / that corresponds with it." This comparison between the final form and the manuscript goes a long way toward

⁵⁹⁵ Whitman 1965, 129.

⁵⁹⁶ Whitman 1955, 106.

the understanding of the role the line "The prairie-grass dividing, its special odor breathing" plays. Whereas Whitman refers specifically to *Prairie-Grass* area in the manuscript, in the final form, he makes a distinction between the *Prairie-Grass* area and other areas. This is the answer to what "The prairie-Grass" does divide.

Secondly, the comparison between the first appearance version (1860) and the final version corroborates this line of thought. There are two differences, and the first one is the title. The poem is in Calamus cluster, so it is titled "Calamus 25." The other difference regards wording and has more significance. Although Whitman added the first line, the phrasing is slightly different from that of the final version; he wrote, "The prairie-grass dividing, its *own* odor breathing." (emphasis mine)⁵⁹⁷ The difference between the terms "own" and "special" gives us a clue. I argue that these two wordings relate to the aforementioned distinction Whitman seeks to make between *Prairie-Grass* area and other areas. While the term "own" suggests that the emphasis is on the Prairie itself, "special" emphasizes the comparison between the Prairie and other areas. In other words, the term "special" creates a binary pair between "own" and what is distinctive, different. Furthermore, it is noticeable that in the three-stage development of the poem, Whitman more and more came to make the distinction between the "special" *Prairie* area and other areas.

To conclude, Whitman added the term "dividing" so that he could highlight the Prairie's specialness which consists of its odor. In this distinction, the touchstone is whether such "special odor" exists or not. Indeed, the first line of the poem is the epitome of the framework of dilation-respiration-olfaction scheme. As mentioned in Introduction, Whitman breathes "The prairie-grass's special *odor*" – not "The prairie-grass's special *air*. In the second and third stage in the development of the poem, Whitman sticks to the wording of "odor breathing." Whitman's introduction of "odor" in the place of "air" validates

⁵⁹⁷ Whitman 1860-61, 368.

dilation-respiration-olfaction scheme; we witness its synergy effect in the amplification of the signification of all the constituents – Millar's dilation, Law's respiration, and my olfaction theme. Furthermore, the modified *pride*-respiration-olfaction scheme helps to deepen our understanding of the conflation of politics and poetics in "The Prairie-Grass Dividing." The olfactory trope in the first line – "The prairie-grass dividing, its special odor breathing" – is the vehicle for invigorating pride to continue the American experiment.

As will be shown in the next chapter, the double roles of the olfactory trope – the symbol of something essential and the basis of a comparison – are not limited to "The Prairie-Grass Dividing," but can also be seen in another poem. In section 2 of "Song of Myself," Whitman writes:

Houses and rooms are full of perfumes the shelves are crowded with perfumes,

I breathe the fragrance myself, and know it and like it,

The distillation would intoxicate me also, but I shall not let it. 598

Here, as the next chapter will explicate, Whitman prefers the fragrance to perfumes since perfumes signify the Old World, and fragrance – Whitman's own odor, native to own – the New World. The same logic runs in "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" and the section 2 of "Song of Myself."

"The Prairie-Grass Dividing" was first published in *Leaves of Grass* in 1860 when Whitman came to be more of a poet of the West than of all the U.S. regions. Henry Nash Smith, in "Walt Whitman and Manifest Destiny," holds that during the period between 1856 and 1860 the subject matter of *Leaves of Grass* moved from the overall U.S. to the West. Smith states:

Whitman originally set out to sing the whole continent, East and West, North and South; [...] But the Atlantic seaboard after all represented the past, the shadow of Europe, cities, sophistication, a derivative and

⁵⁹⁸ Whitman 1959, 25.

⁵⁹⁹ Smith 1950, 44-45.

conventional life and literature. Beyond, occupying the overwhelming geographical mass of the continent, lay the West, a realm where nature loomed larger than civilization and where feudalism had never been established. There, evidently, would grow up the truly American society of the future. By 1860 Whitman had become aware that his original assumptions logically implied the Western orientation inherent in the cult of manifest destiny.

Whitman's gradual attraction to the West is also detailed by Folsom's "Walt Whitman's Prairie Paradise." Whitman became a worshiper of the Prairie. Folsom points out that Whitman went so far as to say that his Western experiences are the core to all his life work. 601

Thus it is appropriate to suppose that there is an incentive for Whitman to bring the key motif in the original "Song of Myself" in 1855 – the concept of dilation or the respiration motif – onto the West he was newly attracted to. As previously mentioned, Whitman gradually came to make an increasing distinction between the Prairie area and other areas. In line with this, Whitman wrote another short poem titled "Others may praise what they like" which contains both the respiration motif and the West.

Others may praise what they like;

But I, from the banks of the running Missouri, praise nothing in art or aught else,

Till it has well inhaled the atmosphere of this river, also the western prairie-scent,

And exudes it all again. 602

Although the subject matter of the poem is limited to "art or aught else," this upfront of respiration motif in the poem as well as "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" is that of "Song of Myself" in redux. "Art" in "Others may praise what they like" signifies more than merely an art form, it is seen as an ideal American manifestation of the future; art here is a future or ideal of America. For Whitman, the American Prairie is "the home both of what I would call

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁰¹ Folsom 1999, 47-48.

⁶⁰² Whitman 1965, 393.

America's distinctive ideas and distinctive realities,"⁶⁰³ and art needs to reflect those. The respiration of "the atmosphere of this river, also the western prairie-scent" becomes the fresh and blood of art.

Interestingly, Whitman insisting on the respiration motif in "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" and "Others may praise what they like" is in line with the conventional wisdom of the time. There are two points to consider. The first one is the difficulty in grasping the Prairie visually, 604 and the flip side of it – the Prairie as the symbol of Great Leveler, 605 and the other is the association of the Prairie with the lung of the continent. 606 As far as the first point is concerned – the difficulty in visual perception –, Joni L. Kinsey, Rebecca Roberts, and Robert F. Sayre state:

Prairies had long been considered both artistically and physically barren by Euro-American travelers and artists—the prairies were difficult to "read" using conventional understandings of the uses and artistic values of landscapes. Because of the seeming absence of prospects or viewpoints provided by mountains, forests, houses, and cultivated fields, the prairie could seem like a sea made of grasses; with no points of reference and no signs of agricultural promise, one could easily get lost. 607

In spite of our image of a panoramic view of the Prairie – enabled by our spatial perception with the help of technology –, in the nineteenth century, people were at pains to perceive it visually. Nevertheless, the artistic difficulty in visualizing the Prairie has a silver lining. The limitless expansion of level plane signified the "Great Leveler." Jane E. Simonsen states:

The prairie's level plane became the "Great Leveler," a region where American citizens would stand on equal footing with one another, united in their purpose and struggle to create fertile farmland out of

606 Ibid., 28.

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⁶⁰³ Whitman 1882, 142.

⁶⁰⁴ Kinsey, Roberts, and Sayre 1999, 62-63.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid., 63.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid., 62-63.

the ocean of prairie grass. Natural features reinforced this democratic vision: grand vistas of sky and grassland and gently rolling hills symbolized grand purpose. The prairie's prospect was a level one in which national democratic goals were echoed and legitimated by the very landscape on which those dreams were built. 608

The expansive levelness of the Prairie evokes an image of egalitarianism and democracy, which Whitman sings in Leaves of Grass 1855. This feature of the Prairie is enough to encourage Whitman to overcome the difficulty in the visual portrayal of the Prairie and seek an alternative modality – olfaction – so that he can poeticize the Prairie.

The second point – more important and direct in the explanation of Whitman's use of respiration motif in poeticizing the Prairie – is that the prairie was viewed as the lung of the continent. Kinsey, Roberts, and Sayre states:

> The prairies of the West are the lungs of the continent, and upon reaching them men take a long breath, which makes them more largely human than they ever were before." Prairie-as-lung saves the writer from describing prairie-as-prairie, while also promoting the connection between prairie and person. Prairie-as-lung becomes enlarged human lung; enlarged lung becomes expanded, "more largely human" person; and person embodies prairie. 609

The phrase "take a long breath, which makes them more largely human than they ever were before" rings a bell; this is the process of dilation mentioned in the first section. In "The Prairie-Grass Dividing," Whitman's phrase "I dilate you with tremendous breath, I buoy you up" in "Song of Myself" 1855 is united with "the prairie grass's special odor." The "tremendous breath" of the Prairie, not Whitman himself, "dilates you" and "buoys you up" to the renewed vigor in self-government. The prairie grass's special odor is native to the U.S.; it is a soul, an emanation from the soil. 610 The prairie grass's special odor infuses invigorating pride in self-government to those who breathe it so that they become "Those of earth-born

⁶⁰⁸ Jane E. Simonsen, "On Level Ground: Alexander Gardner's Photographs of the Kansas Prairies" in Recovering the Prairie, ed. Robert F. Sayre (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 63. Kinsey, Roberts, and Sayre 1999, 28.
 Folsom 1999, 50.

passion, simple, never constrain'd, never obedient, / Those of inland America." When Whitman wrote, "its special odor breathing, / I demand of it the spiritual corresponding," what follows – even though it is one of the most explicit portrayals of Jeffersonian doctrine in the poems of Whitman – does not suffer from ivory-towerism.

Nevertheless, "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" is not based on Whitman's actual experience of the Prairie land but on his reflection of what the U.S. should be. (It is known that Whitman had seen the Prairie only once when he wrote the poem. 612 Whitman's second and last encounter with Prairie was realized in 1879.613 The source of the poet is mainly Prairie photographs. 614) Thus written "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" illustrates that the prairie area would become the model for other areas in the U.S. Still, Prairie is Prairie, an empty space. How can Whitman perceive Jeffersonian self-government in such a place? Apart from Jeffersonian background mentioned in the Introduction of this chapter as well as the image of the Prairie as "Great Leveler," there are two factors to consider. Firstly, the sense of smell – "its special odor breathing" – can transcend time; it can both presage the future and recall the past, as shown in the first section. The other factor is Whitman's distinctive temporal perception. Whitman, in the preface of Leaves of Grass 1855, states that "He learns the lesson he places himself where the future becomes present."615 In "To a Historian," Whitman writes that "I project the history of the future." The merger of the trait of olfaction and Whitman's own temporal dilation enables him to envision Jeffersonian self-government in an empty space. Indeed, this shows the force of olfaction in Whitman's poetics, given that his actual encounter with the Prairie was merely a transitory one when he wrote the poem.

⁶¹¹ Whitman 1965, 129.

⁶¹² Folsom 1999, 47. In 1848, Whitman went to New Orleans, and he saw the Prairie on the way to it.

⁶¹³ Ibid.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid.

⁶¹⁵ Whitman 1959, 12.

⁶¹⁶ Whitman 1965, 4.

There are mixed signals here. That Whitman can still conjure up Jeffersonian American character is a good one, but his doing so only by emphasis on the specialness of the Prairie area – with the exclusion of other areas – casts a shadow. At play are both the national crisis of the Civil War as well as Whitman's deteriorating perception of himself – partly caused by the failure of *Leaves of Grass* 1855⁶¹⁷ and 1856.⁶¹⁸ R.W.B. Lewis, with various scholars, notes the tonal change between sanguine *Leaves of Grass* 1855 and soul-crushed 1860 version of it.⁶¹⁹ For instance Reynolds notes, "Whitman, in "As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life," verges on admitting that his poetic mission has been a failure and that his aspiration of becoming the nation's bard is dead."⁶²⁰ Interesting is that this psychological shift of Whitman coincides with his increasing attraction to the West, as Smith shows in the quote above. It can be said that just as the West, generally, served as "the safety valve" to Northerners, ⁶²¹ so to Whitman in a distinctive – poetic-political – way.

In the next section, we investigate "Locations and Times." In the metaphysical poem of "Locations and Times," Whitman seeks to do his soul-searching without the special odor of the Prairie which helps Whitman to dilate personally and interpersonally. Still, in "Locations and Times," Whitman appeals to olfaction by adding "odors" to the property of a thing; he seeks to go beyond *locations and times*.

3. Whitman's epistemology in "Locations and Times"

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⁶¹⁷ Ivan Marki, "Leaves of Grass, 1855 Edition" in *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia*, eds. J.R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 358.

⁶¹⁸ Harold Aspiz, "Leaves of Grass, 1856 Edition" in *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia*, eds. J.R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 359.

⁶¹⁹ R.W.B. Lewis, "Walt Whitman: Always Going Out and Coming In" in *Bloom's Modern Critical Views: Walt Whitman*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1985), 77.

⁶²⁰ Reynolds 1995, 380.

⁶²¹ Foner 1995, 27.

As Lawrence Buell points out, American Transcendentalists valued the notion of correspondence;⁶²² Buell states that "The basis of Transcendentalist thinking as to the role of nature in art is the idea of a metaphysical correspondence between nature and spirit, as expressed chiefly by Emerson."⁶²³ Emerson states:

(I am a poet) in the sense of a perceiver and dear lover of the harmonies that are in the soul and in matter, and specially of the correspondences between these and those. 624

It is apparent that Whitman was influenced by Transcendentalist notion of correspondence, which is represented, for instance, by the line such as "I will make the poems of materials, for I think they are to be the most spiritual poems." Yet, oddly enough, *Leaves of Grass* has only three poems which explicitly contain the term "correspond" (including its variants); the first one is "The Prairie-Grass Dividing," the next one "Locations and Times", and the last one "By Blue Ontario's Shore." Given that "By Blue Ontario's Shore" is the preface to 1855 *Leaves of Grass* turned into a poem, 627 there are only two poems with the term "correspond" which were written as poetry at the onset.

Even more interestingly, both "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" (as the previous section explored) and "Locations and Times" have olfactory tropes; "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" – "The prairie-grass dividing, its special odor breathing, I demand of it the spiritual corresponding," and "Locations and Times" – "Forms, colors, densities, odors – what is it in me that corresponds with them?" This singularity may be just a coincidence but I argue

⁶²² Buell 1974, 51-52, 149.

⁶²³ Ibid., 149.

⁶²⁴ Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson vol. I*, ed. Ralph L. Rusk (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 435.

⁶²⁵ Whitman 1965, 18.

⁶²⁶ Ibid., 129, 277-278, 343.

⁶²⁷ Kirsten Silva Gruesz, ""By Blue Ontario's Shore" (1856)" in *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia*, eds. J.R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 91; While in the preface to *Leaves of Grass* 1855 Whitman wrote, "Here at last is something in the doings of man that corresponds with the broadcast doings of the day and night" (Whitman 1959, 5.), he wrote in "By Blue Ontario shore," "Here the doings of men correspond with the broadcast doings of the day and night, (Whitman 1965, 343).

⁶²⁸ Whitman 1965, 129, 277-278.

that it warrants a closer examination; it seems likely that these two poems are quintessential in representing the two strands of Whitman's poetics. Whereas "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" embodies interpersonal dilation or communal intersubjectivity, and "Locations and Times" forefronts personal dilation or the individual interpenetration. "Locations and Times" is a short poem:

Locations and times – what is it in me that meets them all, whenever and wherever, and makes me at home?

Forms, colors, densities, odors – what is it in me that corresponds with them? 629

I argue that the usage of the term "odors" in the poem reveals a lot of Whitman's epistemology; its seeming extraneity to the subject matter – odor is not a good indicator of space and time; it is hard to pinpoint these aspects of an odorant⁶³⁰ – suggests that Whitman seeks to grasp more than purely materialistic "Locations and Times," and that odor plays a key role it doing so. Examining Whitman's epistemology helps. Marion Harris, in "Nature and materialism: fundamentals in Whitman's epistemology," states that in Whitman's epistemology, there are two levels of experiences which lead to understanding: sensory experience – leading to "the physical conscience" and affective one – "the moral and spiritual conscience," which is the final goal of Whitman's epistemology. In the process, there is a correspondence between two experiences; sensory experience leads to affective one. Harris refers to the importance of the five senses in Whitman's poems, but she does not specify which sense plays a particular role.

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⁶²⁹ Whitman 1965, 277-278.

⁶³⁰ Clare Batty, "A Representational Account of Olfactory Experience," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 40, no. 4 (December 2010): 531, 533; In Section 1 of this chapter I touch on olfaction's temporal and perceptual liminality.

⁶³¹ Whitman 1882, 250.

⁶³² Ibid.

⁶³³ Harris 1963, 85.

⁶³⁴ Ibid

⁶³⁵ Ibid., 85-86.

In order to better investigate the poem, it is worthwhile to draw a comparison between "Locations and Times" and another poem titled "Of the terrible doubt of Appearance," which was written in the same period (between 1856 and 1860) and contain the phrase of "[...] colors, densities, forms may-be these are (as doubtless they are) only apparitions, and the real something has yet to be known."636 It is noticeable that between the two poems, there is a slight difference in the enumeration of the properties of a thing. Whereas "colors, densities, forms" are picked up in "Of the terrible doubt of Appearance" – with the result being "the real something has yet to be known," in "Locations and Times," "Forms, colors, densities, odors" are chosen so that Whitman can contemplate "what is it in me that corresponds with them?" The comparison of the two poems shows that Whitman demands more than "temporal appearance," and that the insertion of the term "odors" in "Locations and Times" provides the poem with a spiritual correspondence, which is spaceless and timeless; Whitman writes that "what is it in me that meets them all, / whenever and wherever, and makes me at home?" (emphasis mine). The usage of "odors" in "Locations and Times" illustrates the role odor plays in the shift from sensory experience to affective one. The sense of smell – a sense of more of emotion than cognition⁶³⁷ – serves as a bridge between the two types of experiences. This interpretation is borne out by the general notion that the term "odors" – by its nature as previously mentioned - in "Locations and Times" is not suitable for the supplement for "Forms, colors, densities." In other words, the usage of odor here is solely to express the elevation from sensory experience to affective one; it is a process of sublimation of a lower consciousness to a higher one. It follows that it is through olfaction that the correspondence between sensory experience and the innermost of his mind is reached. 638

⁶³⁶ Whitman 1965, 120.

⁶³⁷ Trygg Engen, *The perception of odors* (New York: Academic Press, 1982), 3.

That the two poems belong to a different cluster – "Of the terrible doubt of Appearance" to "Calamus" cluster, and "Locations and Times" to "Leaves of Grass" cluster – in *Leaves of Grass* 1860 indicates that Whitman takes different approaches to the question of the "correspondence" between the material and the spiritual. Whereas in "Of the terrible doubt of Appearance," Whitman later has recourse to his companions by

In this case, revisiting the dilation-respiration-olfaction scheme is revealing. The elevation from sensory experience to affective one is similar to the concept of dilation – spiritual expansiveness – or interpenetration within an individual consciousness. It is interesting to see that olfaction plays various roles by serving as a hub in Whitman's thinking. The usage "odor" in "Locations and Times" is also explained by olfaction's characteristic of temporal and perceptual liminality in the context of dilation. The comparison of the poem with "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" also helps. On the one hand, the prairie grass itself provides an odorant – its special odor –, which enables personal and interpersonal dilation. On the other hand, in "Times and Locations," without any specific odorant given, seeking after personal dilation or interpenetration necessitates an (artificial) appeal to odor.

Conclusion

This chapter has investigated Whitman's two poems: "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" – one of Whitman's canonical works – and "Locations and Times" – a minor one. "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" and "Locations and Times" are the only two poems in the deathbed edition of *Leaves of Grass* which explicitly bear the term "correspond," and which also happen to bear the term "odor."

Through the investigation of the two poems, this chapter has shown Whitman's olfaction-centered thinking in his poetics and epistemology. "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" concerns communal intersubjectivity or interpersonal dilation, representing the poetics of dilation-respiration-olfaction scheme. Furthermore, through the paraphrase of dilation into pride, I have recast dilation-respiration-olfaction scheme into *pride*-respiration-olfaction scheme. Thus, the forged link between pride and olfaction helps to better understand the

adding that "To me, these, and the like of these, are curiously answered by my lovers, my dear friends (Whitman 1860-61, 353)," in "Locations and Times," Whitman takes a strictly individual approach and thus he adds "odor" in the list of the properties of a thing. Thus, despite this particular difference between the two poems, the role of "odor" in "Locations and Times" – a poem of individual exploration into "correspondence" – remains valid.

conflation of politics and poetics in "The Prairie-Grass Dividing." The olfactory trope in the first line – "The prairie-grass dividing, its special odor breathing" – is the vehicle for invigorating pride to continue the American experiment. "Locations and Times" focuses on individual interpenetration or personal dilation, illustrating Whitman's epistemology. What connects the two poems is the key overarching term "correspond" and "odor." Serving as a hub, olfaction plays the central role in Whitman's thinking.

This chapter has shown that the dilation(pride)-respiration-olfaction scheme runs from "Song of Myself" to "The Prairie-Grass Dividing," while "the open *air*" in "Song of Myself" takes the more specific form of "The prairie-grass's special *odor*" in "The Prairie-Grass Dividing." In the analysis of "Locations and Times," this chapter has illustrated the special role odor plays in the sublimation of a lower consciousness to a higher one. It is through olfaction that the correspondence between sensory experience and the innermost of Whitman's mind is reached.

Last but not least, the character of "Those of inland America" portrayed in "The Prairie-Grass Dividing" is Whitman's cultural translation of the political philosophy in Jefferson's *Declaration of Independence*; the poem is a singular meeting point of Whitman and Jefferson's ideas. Although it cannot be asserted that Whitman's employment of olfactory tropes in the poem derived from the influence of Jefferson, those tropes play a vital role in connecting ideas of Whitman and Jefferson in that the common thread of invigorating pride is expressed through such tropes.

6. New Decorums: Whitman's olfactory tropes in "Song of Myself"

Introduction

The relation between Whitman and Emerson, who represents Transcendentalism, ⁶³⁹ has intrigued manifold critics. ⁶⁴⁰ What makes things complicated is that Whitman's own accounts run the gamut from the full influence of Emerson on him – master-disciple relation ⁶⁴¹ – to almost none. ⁶⁴² Whitman seems both in and out of sync with Transcendentalism; on the one hand, Emerson had faith in Whitman. ⁶⁴³ On the other hand, Whitman was at the periphery of Transcendentalism. ⁶⁴⁴

There are two climaxes in the relation; one is Emerson's 1855 letter to Whitman, which started the relation, and the other is the confrontation over the parts of 1860 *Leaves of Grass*, 645 which led to the end of personal relation between the two. 446 Yet the main point of the contention among the critics of Whitman is "a long foreground" in Emerson's 1855 letter which reads, "I greet you at the beginning of a great career, which you must have had a long foreground somewhere, for such a start." The relation between Whitman and Emerson translates into a question: to what extent was Whitman influenced by Emerson, especially in "a long foreground"? 648

Although the overall tone of Emerson's 1855 letter to Whitman is very positive, the devil is in the detail. We are not sure what specific parts made Emerson praise *Leaves of Grass*. 649

Jay Grossman points out that there are neither the term "poet" nor "poetry" in the letter. 650

⁶³⁹ Loving 1982, 9.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid., xi.

⁶⁴¹ Whitman 1965, 732-741.

⁶⁴² John Burroughs, *Notes on Walt Whitman as Poet and Person, 2d ed.* (New York: American News Company, 1871), 16.

⁶⁴³ Loving 1982, 142.

⁶⁴⁴ Buell 1974, 7.

⁶⁴⁵ Grossman 2003, 75.

⁶⁴⁶ Loving 1982, 107.

⁶⁴⁷ Whitman 1965, 731-732.

⁶⁴⁸ Grossman 2003, 94.

⁶⁴⁹ Loving 1982, 92-93.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid., 93.

Thus what critics have argued about the letter amounts to drawing the line in the sand in their evaluation of the letter, and by extension, the relation between Whitman and Emerson.

Indeed, Emerson would add qualification if he had known his letter would be published.⁶⁵¹ He states:

There are parts of the book where I hold my nose as I read. One must not be too squeamish when a chemist brings him to a mass of filth and says, 'See, the great laws are at work here also,' but it is a fine art if he can deodorise his illustration...⁶⁵²

Emerson indicates that Whitman's olfactory tropes violate literary decorum. He most probably mentions section 49 of "Song of Myself": Whitman writes "As to you corpse I think you are good manure, but that does not offend me, / I smell the white roses sweetscented and growing, / I reach to the leafy lips I reach to the polish'd breasts of melons." What is inoffensive to Whitman is offensive to Emerson. Apart from this instance, there are various candidates – "The scent of these arm-pits is finer than prayer," the phrase I have touched on in Section 5 of Introduction – which would make Emerson hold his nose. He dislikes Whitman's olfactory tropes because they are not suitable in "fine art." Emerson is specific about that.

The term "deodorise" in the quote of Emerson deserves attention; it is a newly coined word which got wider circulation in 1840s and 1850s⁶⁵⁵ with the publication of such books as James F. Johnston's *The chemistry of common life* in 1853.⁶⁵⁶ Americans started to deodorize,⁶⁵⁷ and Emerson's (jocular) usage of the term shows that Emerson was keen both on this phenomenon and on Whitman's (re)odorization. Emerson's reaction is understandable;

653 Whitman 1959, 84.

⁶⁵¹ Conway 1882, 360.

⁶⁵² Ibid.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid., 49.

⁶⁵⁵ Google Ngram Viewer (deodorise, 1800-2019, American English). The chart shows that from 1845 to 1857 the frequency of the usage of the term "deodorise" increased exponentially.

Melanie Kiechle, A. Smell Detectives: An Olfactory History of Nineteenth-Century Urban America (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2017), 71.
 Ibid., xiii.

Whitman was against the trend of deodorization in American society. As Section 5 of the Introduction explored, the more people became aware of their individual self, the more the odor of others became repugnant to them.

Given that Emerson clearly evinces negative attitude toward Whitman's olfactory tropes, exploring the relation between Whitman and Transcendentalism in this context would be a good start. This approach is new because the critics – who themselves have lived in a more and more deodorized society⁶⁵⁸ – have followed in the footsteps of Emerson; they have studied Whitman's poems through "deodorizing" them. Although Emerson's use of "deodorise" is not as famous as the 1855 letter itself, the word has seemed to influence the critics of Whitman. Whitman sought to break the taboo of the sense of smell whereas the critics have made that taboo remain taboo. Small is the number of research on Whitman's olfactory tropes; they include Kenneth Burke's "Policy Made Personal: Whitman's Verse and Prose-Salient Traits," Christopher Looby's "The Roots of the Orchis, the Iuli of Chesnuts: The Odor of Male Solitude," and Daniela Babilon's ""Wafted with the Odor of His Body or Breath:" Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself"" in her book *The Power of Smell in American Literature: Odor, Affect, and Social Inequality*.

Burke's essay was written in the context of Burke's dramatistic poetics, ⁶⁵⁹ and he does not put an emphasis on the first five stanzas of *Song of Myself*. Looby's essay investigates the features of "The olfactory Text" which covers Walt Whitman (Looby calls *Leaves of Grass* "a redolent text"), Francis Parkman, Herman Melville, and Thomas Wentworth Higginson. ⁶⁶⁰ Yet Looby does so as a context for understanding an American anti-masturbation treatise of the mid-nineteenth century. Babilon "has aimed at giving a panoramic view of how smell reference were used throughout the centuries in order to chronicle the great significance of the

⁶⁵⁸ Howes 1991, 144.

⁶⁵⁹ Rueckert 1988, 62

⁶⁶⁰ Looby 1995, 170.

motif of olfaction for American literature."⁶⁶¹ Her interest in "examining the textual and social impact of the literary motif of smell"⁶⁶² prompts her to state that "Whitman changes the course of American literature" in this respect. Babilon's focus is on Whitman's olfactory tropes both as "his call for democracy, unity, and individuality"⁶⁶⁴ and as social criticism which breaks down the various dualisms: between body and soul, self and others, and so on. Babilon investigates various parts of "Song of Myself" which spread over the whole of it, but unlike hers, my focus is on the specifics of figures of speech in the first five stanzas of the poem. Thus, the focal points of these three researches are different from mine.

My approach has another advantage; it is a clean slate, and thus it enables to refocus solely on the relation between Whitman and Emerson, and more importantly on *Leaves of Grass* per se. The relation between Whitman and Emerson is so important that some critics tend to fail to differentiate the actual relation between Whitman and Emerson from the imbroglio about its analysis.

In speaking on where Emerson and Whitman stand on olfactory tropes, the focus is not on the similarities but on the dissimilarities. First of all, Jerome Loving states that Emerson and Whitman played "complementary roles in the literature of the American Renaissance." Loving explains their roles: "Emerson provided the literary vision and Whitman conducted the celebration" Whitman is both disciple and benefactor to Emerson. Lawrence Buell states that Emerson's literary vision is founded on "the method of moment-by-moment

⁶⁶¹ Babilon 2017, 17.

⁶⁶² Ibid., 12.

⁶⁶³ Ibid., 100.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid., 18.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid., 101.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid., 100-109

⁶⁶⁷ Loving 1982, 12.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid., 18.

⁶⁶⁹ Whitman 1965, 732-741.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid., 731-732.

inspiration as the most natural path for the intellect."⁶⁷¹ I argue that this distinction of the roles is the key to understanding Whitman's and Emerson's different perceptions of olfactory tropes; in actual enactments of Emerson's literary vision in the poem, Whitman needed to employ them.

Secondly, the difference between Whitman's and Emerson's attitude toward experience are noteworthy. On the one hand, Whitman seeks to incorporate the whole range of human consciousness, including his seamy sides⁶⁷²; he states, "We shall cease shamming and be what we really are."⁶⁷³ On the other hand, Emerson is solely after mystical experience, and the rarity of it⁶⁷⁴ made him admit that "it is remarkable that our faith in ecstasy consists with total inexperience of it."⁶⁷⁵ In this context, it is natural that Whitman surpasses the limit of Transcendentalism in the enactment of experience of "moment-by-moment inspiration."⁶⁷⁶ I propose that what enables Whitman to surpass the limit of Transcendentalism is his uncompromising dedication to the American experiment of self-government — personal self-governing, self-government in poeticization, and political self-government —, as Chapter 3 explored. As Buell states, Whitman "indulged and expressed the chaos of experience that Emerson came to fear."⁶⁷⁷ Whitman's olfactory tropes appear to Emerson one of such chaotic experiences. Whitman's olfactory tropes symbolize experimental encounter par excellence: experimental encounter with the world, and ultimately, oneself.

Thirdly, Loving also observes Whitman's distinctive view of science in his poems; "whereas Whitman's aim is to combine scientific materialism and mysticism, Emerson used

⁶⁷¹ Buell 1974, 330.

⁶⁷² Ibid., 327.

⁶⁷³ Whitman 1855, 205-212.

⁶⁷⁴ Buell 1974, 59.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson vol. VI*, ed. Edward W. Emerson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1904), 213.

⁶⁷⁶ Buell 1974, 330.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid.

science as a means to an end."⁶⁷⁸ Joseph Beaver maintains that while Emerson was attracted by only the laws and the order in science which can confirm the moral laws – the attitude embodying the Old World's way of thinking in the eyes of Whitman –, Whitman accepted science as such.⁶⁷⁹ Whitman states, "Exact science and its practical movements are no checks on the greatest poet but *always* his encouragement and support"⁶⁸⁰ (emphasis mine). Thus while Whitman seeks to "bring a chemist with filth" into his poems, Emerson demanded and afforded to be choosy about how to "illustrate." Emerson seeks to deodorize fine art, Whitman intentionally "odorizes" it.

Last but not least, Emerson states that "Whitman is hurt by hard life and too animal experience." ⁶⁸¹ What made Emerson associate Whitman with "animal experience" is corporeal tropes in *Leaves of Grass*, especially olfactory ones. (I will touch on the association between "animal experience" and olfaction later.) Emerson views this association negatively but Whitman – the poet of the body – positively.

Leaves of Grass is both in and out of the orbit of Transcendentalism. On the one hand, Whitman's "language experiment". 682 corresponds to Emerson's language experiment. Buell points out:

because spiritual experience is inherently an irrational thing, indeed a denial in itself of reason and logic, it will not bear to be talked about for very long in the language of the understanding, as Emerson noted. To make it convincing demands all the resources of which language is capable. Sensing this, Emerson wisely accompanied his call for an original relation to the universe (in *Nature*) with a call for original use of language.⁶⁸³

⁶⁷⁸ Loving 1982, 58.

⁶⁷⁹ Beaver 1951, 121-125.

⁶⁸⁰ Whitman 1959, 14.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson vol. VI*, ed. Ralph L. Rusk (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 520.

⁶⁸² Whitman 1904, xiii.

⁶⁸³ Buell 1974, 45.

In "The Poet," Emerson states "The man is only half himself, the other half is his expression." Emerson states on the role of language has bearing on Self-reliance, which enables Whitman to self-publish *Leaves of Grass* in his original language. Yet, the transcendental idea here is top-heavy as if to make the power of language compensate for the scarcity of inspirational experience. It can be said that Whitman tries to correct the Transcendentalist's top-heaviness by giving a voice to the whole range of experiences through his "language experiment."

On the other hand, as previously mentioned, Whitman's employment of olfactory tropes surpasses the limit of Transcendentalism. In light of the aforementioned differences, Transcendental perspectives might not enhance but diminish the appreciation of them. Although Whitman's use of olfactory tropes may not be related to science, "a tendency" in the quote below from Beaver's book is applicable here:

We must recall, too, the intellectual outlook and influence of the transcendentalists, but we must be careful not to overestimate that influence. Much of the failure to evaluate correctly Whitman's achievement in science may be traced directly to *a tendency* to lay everything not explainable in any other way at the door of Emerson and his followers⁶⁸⁶ (emphasis mine).

This "tendency to lay everything not explainable in any other way at the door of Emerson and his followers" in the case of Whitman's olfactory tropes has been an obstacle to the appreciation of them. Indeed, a contemporary reader who was free from Transcendentalism called *Leaves of Grass* "odoriferous." Likewise, William Douglas O'Connor in *The Good Gray Poet* (1866) states that ""Song of Myself" starts "with the five senses, beginning with that of smell." (I add that Emerson's qualifications themselves conversely show the

⁶⁸⁶ Beaver 1951, 121.

⁶⁸⁸ Bucke 1884, 107.

⁶⁸⁴ Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Emerson's Prose and Poetry*, eds. Joel Porte and Saundra Morris (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2001), 184.

⁶⁸⁵ Loving 1982, 99.

Justin Kaplan, Walt Whitman: A Life (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1980), 237-238.

conspicuousness of the olfactory tropes in *Leaves of Grass*.) Thus, the study of Whitman's olfactory tropes requires a new approach other than Whitman the transcendentalist approach. By incorporating various olfactory perspectives and applying the expanded notion of olfaction premised on "dilation-respiration-olfaction scheme" in Chapter 5, this chapter reexamines the beginning of "Song of Myself."

In fact, in the first five stanzas of "Song of Myself," there are sixteen olfactory-related words: a spear of summer grass, perfumes (twice), breathe, fragrance, distillation, intoxicate, atmosphere, perfume, distillation, odorless, smoke, respiration, inspiration, air, and sniff (of green leaves and dry leaves, and of the shore and darkcolored sea-rocks, and of hay in the barn). Whitman is a would like to argue that in these stanzas, there are three celebrations — Whitman says, "I celebrate myself" — firstly, calling odor the fragrance and enjoying it, secondly, getting a contact with the atmosphere, and thirdly, calling breath smoke, and that all these celebrations are related to olfaction, which makes olfactory tropes outstanding. Simultaneously, in terms of language, Whitman "substitutes new decorums for the old decorums of writing", he broke free of literary conventions in these celebrations.

James E. Miller, Jr., who calls the poem "the dramatic representation of a mystical experience," points out that the beginning signifies "entry into the mystical state." To express this transition, Whitman was at pains to search for his language. In his self-review, Whitman said, "He makes audacious and native use of his own body and soul. He must re-create poetry with the elements always at hand." R.W.B. Lewis asserts that Whitman tries to communicate absolute novelty⁶⁹⁵ and that his new miracles were acts of senses.

⁶⁸⁹ Whitman 1959, 25.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁹¹ Whitman 1855, 205-212.

⁶⁹² Miller 1957, 6.

⁶⁹³ Ibid., 7.

⁶⁹⁴ Whitman 1855, 205-212.

⁶⁹⁵ R. W. B. Lewis, *The American Adam: Innocence Tragedy and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955), 42.

is well known that Whitman is "the poet of the body." But the question remains: why did Whitman forefront olfaction in the first five stanzas of "Song of Myself"?

In the beginning of "Song of Myself," two events are unfolding. On the one hand, with the first line "I celebrate myself," unnamed "I" embarks on putting into practice what unnamed "He" preaches in the Preface. On the other hand, at another level, Whitman is metamorphosing into a mythical poet. With the olfactory tropes of "new decorums," the double break with the past – with the literary conventions and with the former self – is portrayed.

The first five stanzas are striking in two ways. Firstly, in the works of Whitman, olfactory tropes are most densely placed here, as the above enumeration of sixteen olfactory-related words shows. Secondly, they not only bear the numerous presences of olfactory tropes but also the relative absence of other senses (except for the fifth stanza). I would like to argue that these are related to what Miller calls the "entry into the mystical state," and in those occasions the sense of smell comes into play most. About the sense of smell and transition – materialization and dematerialization –, Alfred Gell in *Magic, Perfume, Dream*, asserts:

The sense of smell comes into play most when the other senses are in suspense, at moments, one could say, of materialisation and dematerialisation, the coming into being and passing away of things,...⁶⁹⁸

And later on:

The smell of something cooking or the tang of an aperitif mark a transition from concept, expectation, to fact—a notional meal to the actual one—and conversely the standard and familiar postprandial aromatics, nuts, cheeses, coffee and cigars set a seal of finality on the dematerialisation of a meal, now only an insubstantial trace. A mere aroma, in its very lack of substance is more like a concept than it is like a "thing" in the usual sense, and it is really quite appropriate that

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid., 43.

⁶⁹⁷ Whitman 1959, 44.

⁶⁹⁸ Gell 1977, 28.

the olfactory sense should play its greatest role at junctures when it is precisely this attribute of a meal (meal-concept or meal-fact) which is in the balance. ⁶⁹⁹

This train of thought supports the roles of the sense of smell in Whitman's celebrations through which he gradually materializes into a mythical poet. Olfactory tropes are there to smooth out the transition. Among "new miracles of sense," the three celebrations I point out – calling odor the fragrance and enjoying it, coming into contact with the atmosphere, and calling breath smoke – I view the last one as the consummation of them. There is a sea change here; one of the salient traits of his poetry – catalogue – manifests itself for the first time. This chapter is about olfactory reading of "Song of Myself" – reframing it through a lens of olfaction. It will show that Whitman's exploration for new poetic diction and the semantic of Whitman's materialization into a poet – both are interrelated – necessitate frequent usages of olfactory tropes.

It should be borne in mind that apart from the first five stanzas of "Song of Myself," olfactory tropes abound in Whitman's works. 701 Nonetheless, as previously mentioned, research on Whitmanian olfactory tropes is very scant. This chapter investigates the relatively unexplored field of Whitman's olfactory tropes with various perspectives. It consists of two parts: one will focus on the semantics of odor in Whitman's poetic diction and the other on a specific example of Whitman's language of odor.

1. The semantics of odor in Whitman's poetic diction

As Louise Vinge has argued in *The five senses: Studies in a literary tradition*, among senses, sight and hearing, considered solely related to reason and civilization, have enjoyed primacy

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰⁰ Albert Gelpi, *The Tenth Muse: The Psyche of the American Poet* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1975), 175.

⁷⁰¹ Kiyotaka 2020, 33-60.

over others, that is, the sense of smell, taste and touch, and literal representations of senses have reflected this precedence.⁷⁰² In "Olfactory Ontology and Scented Harmonies: On the History of Smell," Stephen Kern states that the sense of smell tends to be regarded as the lowest of the human senses: animalistic, primitive and so on⁷⁰³ and that "[it] reminds us of the intrusiveness of corporeality in human affairs."

As previously mentioned, Whitman, an iconoclastic poet, put those characteristics of the sense of smell in a positive light; in section 4 of "Song of Myself," he said, "Welcome is every organ and attribute of me, and of any man hearty and clean, / Not an inch nor a particle of an inch is vile, and none shall be less familiar than the rest."

Furthermore, I would like to argue that the semantics of odor is relevant to Whitman's composition of his poems, especially his figurative language. Trygg Engen points out the uniqueness of semantics of odor. He asserts that a semantic model for how odors are encoded is lexical collocation at the same level of abstraction. Although he admits the existence of olfactory hierarchical semantic system of super- and subordinates, he calls into question the actual use of it. He shows an example; "the smell of onion may cause one to think of spices or pizza rather than plants and vegetables." Speaking of the verbal encoding of odors, we remain children. Although we, as we grow up, develop and use hierarchical semantic systems of sights and sounds, we do not do so in verbal encoding of odor. Thus the emphasis of olfaction is not on cognition but rather on feeling, experience.

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⁷⁰² Louise Vinge, *The five senses: Studies in a literary tradition* (Paris: LiberLaromedel, 1975), 25,157.

⁷⁰³ Kern 1974, 816.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid., 818.

⁷⁰⁵ Whitman 1959, 27.

⁷⁰⁶ Trygg Engen, *Odor Sensation and Memory* (New York: Praeger, 1991), 84.

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid., 86.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁷¹⁰ Ibid., 85

⁷¹¹ Ibid

⁷¹² Engen 1982, 3.

words, olfactory tropes help readers to have a mind of children like Emerson's eye-ball trope in "Nature."⁷¹³

Although I. A. Richards scarcely touches on Whitman,⁷¹⁴ I propose that Richards's concept of poetic language and the uniqueness of the semantics of odor have something in common. In *Walt Whitman Reconsidered*, Richard Chase states that "in his ideas about words, as in his poetic practice, Whitman is paradoxically extremely civilized and extremely primitive. Both semanticist and bard, he is a kind of primitive I. A. Richards and a sophisticated Orpheus."⁷¹⁵ I propose that Whitman's olfactory tropes are a prime example of what Chase calls "primitive I. A. Richards."

The comparison between I. A. Richards's concept of poetic language and Whitman's olfactory tropes is revealing in three ways. Firstly, on the one hand, I. A. Richards states that in poetry "language tends to return towards a more primitive condition," evoking feeling rather than cognition. On the other hand, as mentioned above, olfaction is a sense of more of emotion than cognition. In this sense, Whitman's adoption of olfactory tropes makes sense. Secondly, Richards also states that "a metaphor is a shift, a carrying over of a word from its normal use to a new use" and that "in an emotive metaphor the shift occurs through some similarity between the feelings the new situation and the normal situation arouse." Given its nature of the aforementioned semantics of odor, an olfactory trope has a potential to be a consummate form of emotive trope. And lastly, Richards states that the gift of a poet is command of original trope, through which feeling of readers are controlled. Whitman desires that his original tropes – olfactory tropes – evoke original feeling inherent to his poem.

⁷¹³ Emerson 2001, 29.

⁷¹⁴ Paul Zweig, Walt Whitman: the making of the poet (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1984), 185.

⁷¹⁵ Richard Chase, Walt Whitman Reconsidered (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1955), 92.

⁷¹⁶ I.A. Richards, *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co Ltd., 1930a), 353-354.

⁷¹⁷ Engen 1982, 3.

⁷¹⁸ Richards 1930a, 221.

⁷¹⁹ Ibid., 223.

These concurrences between Richards's concept of poetic language and the uniqueness of the semantics of odor favor Whitman's employment of olfactory tropes.

Besides, the disruption of hierarchical semantic system leads to egalitarianism where individuals are treated as individuals. Whitman said, "He (Whitman) gives to each just what belongs to it, neither more or less." In so doing, Whitman "judges not as the judge judges but as the sun falling around a helpless thing."⁷²¹ In "Song of the Answerer," he says:

> Every existence has its idiom every thing has an idiom and tongue; He resolves all tongues into his own, and bestows it upon men⁷²²

In his poetry, Whitman seeks to represent everything in an all-inclusive manner by giving it a voice. By extension, non-hierarchical semantic of odor reminds us of Whitmanian catalogue where "unity-in-diversity", 723 is expressed. The spontaneous association of individual entities free from hierarchical semantics helps to connect these on an equal footing, furthering the significance of the additive structure of the technique. As regards catalogue technique, Paul Zweig points out;

> The catalogues are bristling and random, and their randomness is important. For they are extended symbols of a mind that excludes nothing. A random list is by definition, merely a sample of an unspoken list containing everything; and "Song of Myself," similarly, contains everything.⁷²⁴

> > (emphasis mine)

It can be said that Whitmanian catalogue and the sense of smell have something in common. Both can be called liminal by their capability of signifying both what is there and not there. About liminality of the sense of smell, David Howes in "Olfaction and Transition," states:

⁷²⁰ Whitman 1855, 205-212.

⁷²¹ Whitman 1959, 9.

⁷²² Ibid., 130.

⁷²³ Buell 1974, 330.

⁷²⁴ Zweig 1984, 248-249.

As Gell's analysis suggests, the sense of smell is the liminal sense par excellence, constitutive of and at the same time operative across all of the boundaries we draw between different realms and categories of experience.⁷²⁵

Zweig's "unspoken list containing everything" corresponds to Howes' "constitutive of and at the same time operative across all of the boundaries." Liminality between private and public is one of the major themes of Whitman's poetry, ⁷²⁶ and thus his language is the one of liminality, 727 which is most evidently shown in his catalogue. It can be said, conversely, that the sense of smell – liminal sense – is paramount to his works.

The suspension of a hierarchical semantic system has another advantage; it facilitates direct, firsthand experience, which has the potential of firsthand revelation without removes. These well serve the goal of Whitman-Transcendentalist because transcendentalism's central principle is that everyone is divine enough to experience firsthand revelation. 728 In section 48 of "Song of Myself," Whitman said, "I hear and behold God in every object", and "In the faces of men and women I see God." 730 To express these revelational experiences, transcendentalists engaged in a language experiment.

The original use of language occupies the center of Whitman's language experiment; he writes, "In most instances a characteristic word once used in a poem, speech, or what not, is then exhausted."731

In the preface to *Leaves of Grass* 1855, he states:

⁷²⁶ Vivian R. Pollak, "Motherhood" in Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia, eds. J.R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 436.

⁷²⁵ Howes 1991, 131-132.

Allen Grossman, "Whitman's "Whoever You Are Holding Me Now in Hand": Remarks on the Endlessly Repeated Rediscovery of the Incommensurability of the Person" In BREAKING BOUNDS: Whitman and American Cultural Studies, eds. Betsy Erkkila and Jay Grossman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996),

⁷²⁸ Buell 1974, 269.

⁷²⁹ Whitman 1959, 83.

⁷³⁰ Ibid.

⁷³¹ Whitman 1904, 27.

As the attributes of the poets of the kosmos concentre in the real body and soul and in the pleasure of things they possess the superiority of genuineness over all fiction and romance. 732

[...]

The poems distilled from other poems will probably pass away. 733

The autonomy of a poem from outside reference is crucial; it is self-government in poeticization. I.A. Richards says, "Poetry affords the clearest examples of this subordination of reference to attitude. It is the supreme form of emotive language. But there can be no doubt that originally all language was emotive." 734 Whitman's saying "Only the soul is of itself ... all else has reference to what ensues',735 recapitulates the gist of Richards's saying. This conviction of Whitman in self-government in poeticization culminates in "Had I the choice":

Had I the choice to tally greatest bards,

To limn their portraits, stately, beautiful, and emulate at will,

 $[\ldots]$

Metre or wit the best, or choice conceit to wield in perfect rhyme, delight of singers;

These, these, O sea, all these I'd gladly barter,

Would you the undulation of one wave, its trick to me transfer,

Or breathe one breath of yours upon my verse,

And leave its odor there. 736

(emphasis mine)

Through olfactory tropes, Whitman appeals to the sea – which has breath and odor – for showing him/her how to capture the undulating of one wave, which takes precedence over the works and the devices of "great bards" since the former represents "poetic soul" and the latter "reference to what ensues." Seeking revelations which can lead to "absolute novelty," Whitman entreats sea to "breathe one breath of it upon his verse, and leave its odor there." Whitman's distinction between breath and odor – even in a poem about poeticization –

⁷³² Whitman 1959, 17.

⁷³⁴ I.A. Richards, *Principles of literary criticism* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co Ltd. New York. Harcourt, Brace & Company Inc, 1930b), 273.

⁵ Whitman 1959, 19.

⁷³⁶ Whitman 1965, 514.

illustrates his predisposition to the sense of smell. The sense of smell is one of the essential aspects of Whitman's poetics.

2. Olfactory reading of the first five stanzas of "Song of Myself"

In the beginning of "Song of Myself," Whitman writes;

I celebrate myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.⁷³⁷
(First stanza)

I loafe and invite my soul,
I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass.⁷³⁸
(Second stanza)

The meditation over "A spear of summer grass" is a subject matter of "Song of Myself." Whitman's emphasis on uncommon posture – "loafing" – signals his intention to engage in an experimental encounter with the world and self. Whereas Zweig points out that Whitman here "is the quiet, almost shy observer of the spear of grass," I propose that the act to "celebrate myself" heralds invigorating pride to continue the American experiment of self-government, which I mentioned in Chapter 3. Thus oriented Whitman undergoes changes, which are symbolized by olfactory tropes. Whitman continues;

Houses and rooms are full of *perfumes* the shelves are crowded with *perfumes*,

I breathe the fragrance myself, and know it and like it,

The distillation would intoxicate me also, but I shall not let it.⁷⁴¹

(Third Stanza, emphasis mine)

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⁷³⁷ Whitman 1959, 25.

⁷³⁸ Ibid

⁷³⁹ Erkkila 1989, 96.

⁷⁴⁰ Zweig 1984, 299.

⁷⁴¹ Whitman 1959, 25.

There are two odorants – perfume and fragrance – which seem to constitute dualistic elements. A general distinction can be made between perfume – the odorant of artificial origin, used by wealthy Parisians⁷⁴² and fragrance – of the natural and egalitarian origin.⁷⁴³ Perfume here is an imaginary odorant and fragrance a real one. (Strictly speaking this is a misnomer; what is there is not fragrance but Whitman's body odor.) But what do "perfume" and "fragrance" mean more specifically?

On the one hand, Whitman shows the meaning of "perfumes" in his later poem. In "Thou Mother with Thy Equal Brood," Whitman states "The conceits of the poets of other lands I'd bring thee not, / Nor the compliments that have served their turn so long, / Nor rhyme, nor the classics, nor perfume of foreign court or indoor library." "Houses," "rooms" and "shelves" in the third stanza of "Song of Myself" correspond to "foreign court or indoor library" in "Thou Mother with Thy Equal Brood." Thus "perfumes" here in "Song of Myself" is similar to "perfume of foreign court or indoor library" in "Thou Mother with Thy Equal Brood": namely the influence of the Old World.

On the other hand, "fragrance" poses a challenge. Whitman seems to call his odor fragrance but we usually do not do so. Whitman views his odor in a positive light; he says, "I breathe the fragrance myself, and know it and like it." I propose that this is a case of "odor experience peculiar to Whitman" which I mentioned in Section 5 of Introduction. "Breathing the fragrance myself" activates invigorating pride, and in this sense, calling odor fragrance and enjoying it constitute Whitman's first *celebration*. This line of thought helps us to recognize the formal resemblance between "I celebrate myself" in the first stanza and "I breathe the fragrance myself" in the third stanza. The subject and the object in both sentences are the same; "I" and "myself," with the addition of "the fragrance" in the latter. To "breathe

⁷⁴² Engen 1991, 62.

⁷⁴³ Ibid 53

⁷⁴⁴ Whitman 1965, 456.

the fragrance" is more specific than to "celebrate." "The fragrance" stands for "myself" which Whitman "know it and like it," accentuating the comparison with "perfumes" – something foreign. Although the line "I celebrate myself" is in the spotlight and the line "I breathe the fragrance myself" in a limbo, the latter amplifies the meaning of the former through olfactory trope.

Howard J. Waskow notes that Whitman's ambivalent attitude to "perfumes" signals his "inner split."⁷⁴⁵ Whereas Whitman is drawn to "perfumes", he resists them as well; he said, "The distillation would intoxicate me also, but I shall not let it."⁷⁴⁶ Whitman refuses "perfumes" and accepts "fragrance." I propose that what enables Whitman to do so is the aforementioned invigorating pride, pride expressed through "fragrance." Importantly, Whitman's overcoming of his "inner split" occasions a reversal of the value system of the Old World and New World; "the fragrance" represents the New World consciousness and "the perfumes" the Old World consciousness. Whitman's self-government in poeticization leads him to elevate body odor to "fragrance," and his doing so gives a basis both for a comparison between the New World and the Old World – "perfumes" –, and for a case that "fragrance" is better than "perfumes."

Whitman continues;

The atmosphere is not a perfume it has no taste of the distillation it is odorless,

It is for my mouth forever I am in love with it,

I will go to the bank by the wood and become undisguised and naked,

I am mad for it to be in contact with me. 747

(Forth stanza)

Whitman keeps on talking about the new beginning. Freed from *intoxicating perfume* of the Old World, Whitman enjoys the atmosphere of the New World. This is Whitman's second

Waskow 1966, 159-161; I add that Waskow does not pay attention to the role of olfaction here, let alone Whitman's olfactory tropes in general.

⁷⁴⁷ Whitman 1959, 25.

celebration. He loves doing so much that he hits on the idea of reveling more by "going to the bank and becoming undisguised and naked." The objective of Whitman's becoming naked here can be said to be twofold. Manifestly, the first one is with his naked body to appreciate "the atmosphere" more directly. The other is to appreciate "the fragrance himself" more; Engen points out the distinctive mode of "nudism which stresses the natural, animal-like, and aphrodisiac attributes of body odor."

As regards Whitman's liking for his own odor, the line "The scent of these arm-pits is aroma finer than prayer", has been introduced in Section 5 of Introduction as a case of "odor experience peculiar to Whitman. Interestingly, Engen, the founder of the psychological study of olfaction, points out (most possibly without the knowledge of Whitman):

During the student upheavals of the late 1960s and early 1970s, there were some who gave up deodorants, claiming that body odors are natural and that deodorants are therefore unnatural constraints. One might have been inclined to believe that this occurrence was a first, but references to this attitude go back at least 100 years, and it was then associated with nudism.⁷⁵⁰

A hundred years before the 1960s is the 1860s, when Whitman was in his prime. It can be concluded that Whitman may be one of the first who ceased to care about "the scent of these arm-pits" with the attitude of nudism as previously mentioned. More generally, in his dense use of olfactory tropes in the first five stanza of *his first poem*, Whitman seems to show his resistance against the rising trend of deodorization in American society. And more specifically, these can be additional factors which prodded Whitman to call body odor "the fragrance" in the third stanza.

⁷⁴⁸ Engen 1991, 2.

⁷⁴⁹ Whitman 1959, 49.

⁷⁵⁰ Engen 1982, 12.

As Albert Gelpi notes, Whitman's "contact with the atmosphere" causes further change in him; he starts the first catalogue of the poem. So far Whitman's diction is rather abstract but from here it becomes more concrete.

The *smoke* of my own breath,

Echos, ripples, and buzzed whispers loveroot, silkthread, crotch and vine,

My respiration and inspiration the beating of my heart the passing of blood and air through my lungs,

The *sniff* of green leaves and dry leaves, and of the shore and darkcolored sea-rocks, and of hay in the barn,

The sound of the belched words of my voice words loosed to the eddies of the wind,

A few light kisses a few embraces a reaching around of arms,

The play of shine and shade on the trees as the supple boughs wag,

The delight alone or in the rush of the streets, or along the fields and hillsides,

The feeling of health the full-noon trill the song of me rising from bed and meeting the sun.⁷⁵³

(Fifth stanza, emphasis mine)

Importantly, although Whitman gets a contact with the atmosphere, he does not "go to the bank" or "become naked" but continues his meditative loafing – continues his experimental encounter with the world and self. Even with his clothes on, his aroused state is sustained by the reinforced association – through the contact with the atmosphere – between inner body experience and the outer world stimulation. So far Whitman's first celebration is to call body odor fragrance and enjoy it, and the second one is to come into contact with the atmosphere. Now Whitman embarks on the third one: a ritual of fumigation.

The term "smoke" is idiosyncratic. Just as we do not call odor fragrance, so we do not call breath smoke. ⁷⁵⁴ I would like to argue that Whitman enacts a ritual of fumigation and that the

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⁷⁵¹ Gelpi 1975, 175.

⁷⁵² In this catalogue, as James E. Miller, Jr. (1957, 9) notes, all the five senses are referred to, but this chapter focuses on the sense of smell.

⁷⁵³ Whitman 1959, 25-26.

smoke is the result of it; "in" is good spirit – atmosphere, and fragrance – and "out" is bad spirit – perfume. This fumigation is the process of learning and unlearning, and may perhaps be overdue; Emerson states "Our American literature and spiritual history are, we confess, in the optative mood."⁷⁵⁵ With the effects of the first and second celebrations, Whitman displays metamorphoses from the Old World consciousness to the New World consciousness. His entrance into a new phase is emphasized by olfactory tropes.

This ritual of fumigation is distinctive in various ways; the place and the catalyst are atypical. Over a long time, people around the world have used fumigation for physical and psychological health, and usually a ritual of fumigation is held in a dark, hidden place. But Whitman's fumigation is held in the open air, tallying with the tenet of his theory on poems; Whitman said, I swear I never will translate myself at all, only to him or her who privately stays with me in the open air. Moreover, generally, the catalyst used in rite of fumigation is smoke from a particular substance burned. However, the catalyst of Whitman's fumigation is *atmosphere* – life-giving air – whose affordability and availability is the key. In section 16 of Song of Myself, Whitman says, breathe the air and leave plenty after me had in section 17 (later deleted) This is the common air that bathes the globe. The place and the catalyst for the fumigation need to be native-origin. This is a new mysticism performed not behind the closed doors but in the open air. The site and the catalyst need to be commonplace because this sort of fumigation is supposed to develop into common experience among Americans.

Whitman did not smoke; Walt Whitman, *The Collected Writings of Walt Whitman: The Correspondence, vol.* 5, 1890–1892, ed. Edwin Haviland Miller (New York: New York University Press, 1969), 305.

⁷⁵⁵ Emerson 2001, 98.

David Parkin, "Wafting on the Wind: Smell and the Cycle of Spirit and Matter," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* vol. 13, Wind, Life, Health: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives (2007): S42.
 Whitman 1959, 82.

⁷⁵⁸ Parkin 2007, 542.

⁷⁵⁹ Whitman 1959, 41.

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid.

Last but not least, Whitman seems to undergo the ritual of fumigation (or other *celebrations*) *delightfully*. Whitman shows the essence of learning and unlearning; the process of them need not be painful. After all, Whitman continues to "celebrate himself." To pave the way for this realization, to smooth out the transition, he has already employed various olfactory tropes. Indeed, he seems free from anxiety in his meditative loafing, and, if anything, his inner senses and outer world get more and more in sync. It is worth repeating that the fifth stanza is the first catalogue in the poem, and "the smoke," a token of the ritual of fumigation, is the first word of it. This first catalogue – a symbol of new decorums brimming with vigor of the five senses – is like a bulldozer which shoves the old decorums out of the way.

The term "sniff" deserves the attention, too. It shows Whitman's sense of smell heightens more than usual; sniffing renders the exposure to olfactory stimuli stronger; usually only 5 to 10 % of the air inhaled gets to the olfactory cleft but sniffing makes the ratio increase. ⁷⁶¹ Nevertheless, the term "sniff" has a negative connotation; sniffing is socially frowned upon because of its forefronting of the animalistic side of humans. ⁷⁶² Sniffing at foods – nose approaching close to food – is like physically putting a feeler for it. Whitman shows an example of this in his poem "Faces" – "a dog's snout sniffing for garbage." ⁷⁶³ Yet, with this sniff, Whitman found a new delight; he can differentiate between "the sniff of green leaves and dry leaves, and of the shore and darkcolored sea-rocks, and of hay in the barn." (We rarely pay attention to the difference between various smells.) This increased appreciation of the sense of smell is a *quid pro quo* for Whitman's breaking free of socio-cultural taboo through sniffing. These delights of senses are what is all about this catalogue.

⁷⁶¹ Engen 1991, 24-25.

⁷⁶² Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 171.

⁷⁶³ Whitman 1959, 125.

"The sound of the belched words of my voice words loosed to the eddies of the wind" signifies the first actual deliverance of "barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world." This is Whitman's first utterance of the term "words." The structure of the phrase "The sound of the belched words of my voice" is idiosyncratic; just as "The smoke of my own breath" is made of two-tiered structure (smoke, breath), so is this phrase (sound, words, (and voice)). It is not "words" but "sound" that are "loosed to the eddies of the wind." The *sound* of belched words is devoid of artificiality, untranslatable, and I argue that this feature of the sound enables it to be "loosed to the eddies of the wind" and deliver the message. More specifically, I would like to argue, that "the eddies of the wind" signify presence of a spirit. David Parkin, in his *Wafting on the wind: smell and the cycle of spirit and matter*, points out that "the eddies of the wind" is an "evidence of a spirit" for some people.

It is also common among peoples of the East African coast and inland to point to a sudden eddy of wind in the otherwise calm air, usually on a hot day, as evidence of a spirit. Spirits are normally invisible but can manifest themselves occasionally, as in this example of moving air or wind. ⁷⁶⁶

[...]

Wind itself is not thought of as visible. Yet there is visible and tangible evidence of its presence, as ground leaves and dust swirl in the unexpected gust.⁷⁶⁷

This line of thought would come naturally to Whitman, who himself "depart[s] as air" the end of "Song of Myself." Whitman consigns "The sound of the belched words of my voice" to "a spirit" so that his "barbaric yawp" can travel "over the roofs of the world."

By extension, this part can be said to be related to the sense of smell. Wind consists of air, which in turn is the medium of the sense of smell. Smell is elusive like a spirit.⁷⁶⁹ In his

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid., 25.

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid., 85.

⁷⁶⁶ Parkin 2007, 540.

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid., 549.

⁷⁶⁸ Whitman 1959, 86.

⁷⁶⁹ Parkin 2007, 540.

Jacobson's Organ and the Remarkable Nature of Smell, Lyall Watson states that "The ideas of life and breath and spirit and smell are intertwined in many cultures."⁷⁷⁰ This train of thought tallies with the overall meaning of Whitman's (olfactory) celebrations.

Whitman states, "For the old decorums of writing he substitutes new decorums." From the perspective of language, what we have investigated embodies "new decorums." His forefronting of olfactory tropes in itself epitomizes "new decorums," and especially his conversion of body odor into "the fragrance," breath into "the smoke of the breath," voice into "The sound of the belched words of my voice" typifies it. Form and content, both liberated from the traditional rules, began to affect and reflect each other. Whitman's "new decorums" encompass these mediations between form and content.

Conclusion

This chapter has started with the investigation into the relation between Emerson and Whitman, and in the process, it has found that Whitman's employment of olfactory tropes signifies the salient difference between the two. Whereas Emerson views Whitman's use of olfactory tropes as a breach of the literary decorum, Whitman employs them as a case for "new decorums." Whitman surpassed the limit of Transcendentalism, which was enabled by his uncompromising dedication to the American experiment of self-government – personal self-governing, self-government in poeticization, and political self-government –, as Chapter 3 explored. Based on these findings, this chapter has taken an alternative approach to reading of the first five stanzas of "Song of Myself."

With the incorporation of various olfactory perspectives, this chapter has shown that Whitman's olfactory tropes portray his transformation into a mythical poet and smooth out

Lyall Watson, *Jacobson's Organ and the Remarkable Nature of Smell* (New York: Plume, 2001), 5.
 Whitman 1855, 205-212.

this transition. In the process, Whitman experiences inner split between the New World and the Old World consciousness, but with invigorating pride expressed through "fragrance," he overcomes the split and metamorphoses into a mythical poet. The key here is Whitman's self-government in poeticization, which leads him to elevate body odor to "fragrance." This is Whitman's first "celebration," which is followed by the second – coming into contact with the atmosphere – and the third – calling breath smoke – celebrations. These celebrations are effected by his verbal fiat through olfactory tropes, which finally enables Whitman to communicate with "a spirit," which spreads his "barbaric yawp." All of these are fruition of Whitman's "new decorums."

The foundation of these texts is the uniqueness of the semantic of odor, which induces us to call olfactory language "natural" poetic diction. The suspension of a hierarchical semantic system through olfactory language helps one to return to a mind of children, to enhance spontaneous association, and to feel a sense of liminality with the same effect as Whitmanian catalogue. This is a "language experiment," in which other transcendentalists were also engaged. Whitman entrusted his career as a poet to olfactory tropes. "The smoke" is the first words of his first catalogue – a symbol of "new decorums" brimming with vigor of the five senses – which shoves "old decorums" out of its way in the poem.

Conclusion

The dissertation has undertaken the tasks of exploring the two overlooked motifs in the criticism of Whitman: Jefferson's influence on Whitman – in Part 1 and 2 – and Whitman's olfactory tropes – in Part 3.

Part 1 and Part 2 of the dissertation has provided ample evidence of the so far hidden connections between Whitman and Jefferson through the unearthing of "the unused past" in the criticism of Whitman, which consists both of the writings of Jefferson and of the writings of Whitman mainly before *Leaves of Grass* 1855. With the focus on the central problematic of Part 1 and Part 2 of the dissertation – "Whitman the future poet bias" –, the dissertation shed a new light on the writings of both Whitman and Jefferson in the attempt to connect the two.

As has been seen, Jefferson wields influence over Whitman at the critical junctures: 1) Whitman's departure from party journalist, 2) his choice of poetry as his medium, 3) his choice of the American character as the subject matter of his poetry, and 4) his poeticization of the American character with the emphasis on experience of ordinary people.

More specifically, Part 1 and 2 of the dissertation has shown; 1) the Democratic party's rejection of "Jeffersonian Proviso" caused Whitman to quit the editor of *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*; 2) Whitman's urge to perpetuate the American revolutionary spirit, as Jefferson's ward system had attempted to do, prodded him to choose poetry as his medium; 3) that, like Jefferson, Whitman was attentive to the character of Americans led to his choice of it as the subject matter of his poetry; and 4) Whitman's forefronting of experiences of ordinary people

As shown in the dissertation, in the reading of Whitman's writings before *Leaves of Grass* 1855, the critics of Whitman have been so intent on finding the association between Walter Whitman and Walt Whitman that Walter Whitman's *numerous* references to Jefferson have been under their radar since Walt Whitman rarely refers to Jefferson in *Leaves of Grass*.

in his poems stemmed from his interest in such experiences, which is at the center of Jefferson's political philosophy.

Part 3 of the dissertation, while with its focus more on form, has continued to examine Whitman's works in the framework of the American experiment of self-government. In conflating Whitman's politics and poetics, the dissertation has demonstrated that Whitman chose olfactory tropes as the vehicle for invigorating pride to continue the American experiment of self-government. In so doing, the dissertation has proposed a dilation-respiration-olfaction scheme as a new analytical tool based on the previous scholarships on Whitman. The scheme has been further developed into another one, pride-respiration-olfaction scheme, which helps to show that Whitman's politics and poetics are conflated in Whitmanian pride expressed through olfaction. Another key element in this conflation is the notion of "odor experience peculiar to Whitman": Whitman's notions that body odor is vivifying and that an odor can be something special. Whitman's olfactory tropes which forefront such experience are the medium to signify the aforementioned pride. Whitman's adoption of olfaction as the medium for pride in both instances - via pride-respiration-olfaction scheme or "odor experience peculiar to Whitman" – is all the more noteworthy because his so doing occasions olfaction's shift from the periphery to the center among the five senses. Conflating poetics and politics in this manner is Whitman's poetic-political experiment par excellence.

Whitman's uncompromising dedication to the American experiment of self-government – especially self-government in poeticization – induced him to surpass the limit of Transcendentalism in his employment of olfactory tropes. They constitute Whitman's "new decorums," as seen in the dense placement of them in the first five stanzas of "Song of Myself," – the very beginning of his poetic enterprise. The dissertation has added breadth and depth to the analysis of Whitman's olfactory tropes by showing that Whitman's singular

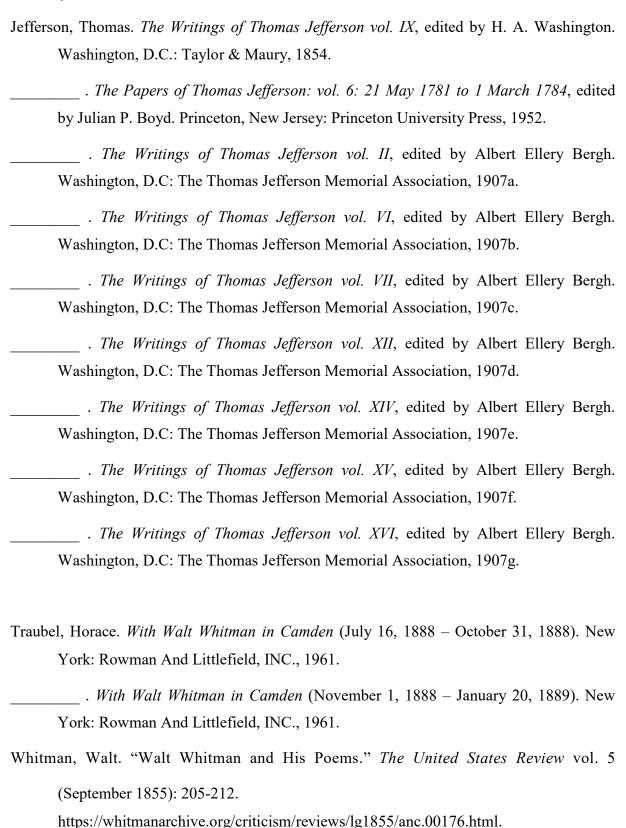
usage of odor in "Locations and Times" signifies the central role olfaction plays in Whitman's epistemological "correspondence" between the material and the spiritual.

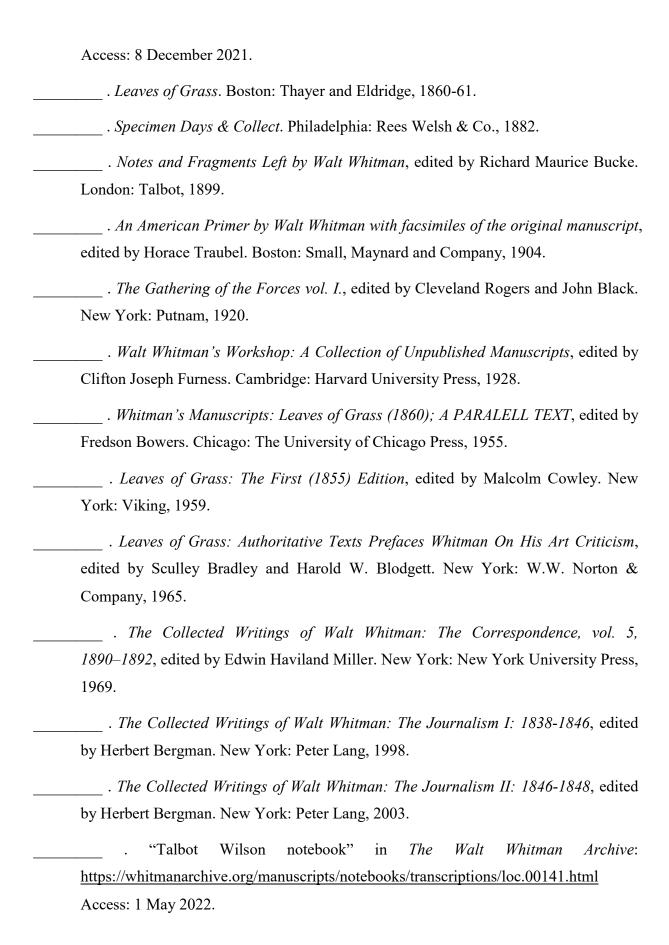
The dissertation has shown that its central hypothesis that "putting Whitman's poetic enterprise into the framework of the American experiment of self-government constitutes a basis for the examination of it" is valid. The framework of the American experiment of self-government has been shown to enable us to link Whitman and Jefferson as well as to better understand Whitman's poetics — especially Whitman's olfactory tropes. It is when viewed from the perspective of the American experiment that Whitman's choice of his medium, his choice of the subject matter, and his way of poeticization of it — including his employment of olfactory tropes — cohere. *Leaves of Grass* is a theater of Jeffersonian self-government.

The dissertation leaves space for new research. My proposals of the synthesis of the previous Whitman's scholarship into new frameworks, such as dilation (pride) -respiration-olfaction scheme and Whitman's poetic merger of three kinds of self-government – personal self-governing, self-government in poeticization, and political self-government – may lead to a further research on Whitman's poetics.

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