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COURBET AND WHITMAN: A CASE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL REBELLION

— to Abbie Hoffman: another free spirit who celebrated himself to free others

The thematic and subjective affinities of Whitman and Courbet are so striking that past failure to make a case for their relationship appears as an historical oddity.[1] Courbet's *The Origin of the World* (1866),[2] showing only a reclining woman's torso in extreme frontal foreshortening, may strike moderns as nothing more than a nineteenth-century "beaver shot," but in its context it would have been as artistically audacious as Whitman's "A Woman Waits for Me," in which the poet apostrophizes his subject:

> Through you I drain the pent-up rivers of myself,
> In you I wrap a thousand onward years,
> On you I graft the grafts of the best-beloved of me and America,
> The drops I distil upon you shall grow fierce and athletic girls, new artists, musicians, and singers,
> The babes I beget upon you are to beget babes in their turn,
> . . . .
> I shall count on the fruits of the gushing showers of them, as I count on the fruits of the gushing showers I give now,
> I shall look for loving crops from the birth, life, death, immortality, I plant so lovingly now.

Whitman's "I Sing the Body Electric" (first titled "Poem of the Body" in the 1856 edition) mingles images of laborers, athletes, and firemen reminiscent of Courbet's subjects of the 1850s, at one point juxtaposing swimmers, wrestlers, and firemen in a single verse and thematically converging with Courbet's Salon entries of 1853 that included *Bathers* and *Wrestlers*. During the years 1850-1851, Courbet undertook a monumental canvas, *Firemen Running to a Fire*, depicting an almost journalistic account of helmeted French firemen confronting a blazing conflagration as frightened spectators—including a mother carrying an infant—look on. French firemen wore brass helmets reminiscent of ancient Roman warriors, and Courbet ingeniously usurped the academic history painter's stock-in-trade by substituting for the anachronistic classical type a hero drawn from modern life. (Later, those academicians who persisted in painting the

stereotyped classical scene were called "pompiers" after the helmeted firemen who worked the water pumps.) Whitman not only makes a similar allusion in "Song of Myself" but practically transcribes Courbet's picture:

> Those ahold of fire-engines and hook-and-ladder ropes more to me than the gods of the antique wars,
> Minding their voices peal through the crash of destruction,
> Their brawny limbs passing safe over charred laths . . . their white foreheads whole and unhurt out of the flames;
> By the mechanic's wife with her babe at her nipple interceding for every person born;

The poet and the painter were particularly responsive to water and often walked the seashore, identifying their expansive egos with the infinite regression of the sea's horizon and the surging ocean. Courbet's paintings of himself saluting the sea at Palavas (1854) and the later stormy seas done at Entretat in 1869[3] come alive when juxtaposed with Whitman's "As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life," published in the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass*:

> As I ebb'd with the ocean of life,
> As I wended the shores I know,
> As I walk'd where the ripples continually wash you Paumanok,
> Where they rustle up hoarse and sibilant,
> Where the fierce old mother endlessly cries for her castaways,
> I musing late in the autumn day, gazing off southward,
> Held by this electric self out of the pride of which I utter poems,
> Was seiz'd by the spirit that trails in the lines underfoot,
> The rim, the sediment that stands for all the water and all the land of the globe.

Or again from the first edition:

> Sea of stretched ground-swells!
> Sea breathing broad and convulsive breaths!
> Sea of the brine of life! Sea of unshovelled and always-ready graves!
> Howler and scooper of storms! Capricious and dainty sea!
> I am integral with you . . . I too am of one phase and of all phases.

Whitman's own visual imagination is echoed in Courbet's interminable stretches of billowing waves, as expressed in this vivid passage of the

poet's haunting dreamscape:

> There is a dream, a picture, that for years at intervals . . . has come noiselessly up before me, and I really believe, fiction as it is, has enter'd largely into my practical life—certainly into my writings, and shaped and color'd them. It is nothing more or less than a stretch of interminable white-brown sand, hard and smooth and broad, with the ocean perpetually, grandly, rolling in upon it, with slow-measured sweep, with rustle and hiss and foam, and many a thump as of low bass drums. This scene, this picture, I say, has risen before me at times for years. Sometimes I wake at night and can hear and see it plainly.[4]

Their shared fascination for the objects of nature often expresses itself in the close-up focus on geological formations and vegetation.[5] Nowhere is this more vividly displayed than in Courbet's *The Oak at Flagey*, a powerful portrait of a massive tree that also stands as an enduring symbol of regional pride and local values (1864).[6] Courbet deliberately included a motif of a hound chasing a hare around the tree to contrast the idea of the permanent with the transitory. Now listen to what Whitman has to say in "The Lesson of a Tree" from *Specimen Days:*

> Here is one of my favorites now before me, a fine yellow poplar, quite straight, perhaps 90 feet high, and four thick at the butt. How strong, vital, enduring! how dumbly eloquent! What suggestions of imperturbability and *being*, as against the human trait of mere *seeming*. Then the qualities, almost emotional, palpably artistic, heroic, of a tree; so innocent and harmless, yet so savage. It *is*, yet says nothing. How it rebukes by its tough and equable serenity all weathers, this gusty-temper'd little whiffet, man, that runs indoors at a mite of rain or snow.[7]

It may be argued that the remarkable coincidence in their artistic strategies and thematics is nothing more than the playing out of a nineteenth-century episteme and that other similar parallels could be easily adduced out of the welter of periodic or *Zeitgeist* options. Nevertheless, let us press on. The basic biographical facts of the lives of Whitman and Courbet are in themselves full of intriguing coincidences. Whitman was born on May 31, 1819 and Courbet less than two weeks later on June 10, 1819, an unlikely pair of twins starting their lives under the sign of Gemini. They were passionately fond of music,

swimming and hunting, and incorporate these recreations into their work as thematic testimony to the free-spirited democrat. Courbet actually composed popular songs, the kind of crude masculine tunes of the cafe that Whitman might have heard at Pfaff's beer hall on lower Broadway in New York. As Laura Meixner has shown, Whitman could envision his *Leaves* transposed to the canvas by a French realist painter, and as a critic of the Brooklyn Art Union exhibition of 1851—the year Courbet showed his *Stonebreakers, Funeral at Ornans*, and *Peasants Returning from the Fair*—he advocated a socially relevant art that would be in essence ardent, radical, and progressive. Both Whitman and Courbet entered adulthood with only a semi-education because of conflicts between their career preferences and paternal pressures, and both passed through a "romantic" phase before forging their identity in a self-conscious "realist" mode which crystallized in the year 1855. That year Whitman and Coubert outraged the establishment and the public on both sides of the Atlantic, and the savage epithets heaped upon their work for lack of decorum, aesthetically flawed structures and compositions, and their aggressive assertion of self-importance seem to have a common source. They flaunted their lack of "finish" and "polish" in their work and lifestyles, borrowing metaphors from the sketching practices of the art world to describe their broadly brushed ventures. The two "roughs" then associated their respective cultural production with their idea of democracy, functioning as Messiahs and trail-blazers of a New Age. They deployed the open-air landscape and its material rugosities as the chief vehicle for their republican and nationalist proclivities.

They emerge out of semi-rural environments and lifestyles: Whitman was the son of a literate farmer and artisan who moved the family from the farming community of West Hills, Long Island, to Brooklyn, while Courbet's more successful father was described as half-peasant and half-bourgeois, a prosperous farmer and vine-grower in the village of Flagey in the Jura Mountains, near the town of Ornans where Courbet was born. The closest large town was Besançon, an industrialized city where Courbet was to study at the Collège Royal, a cultural span analogous to the distance traversed between West Hills and Brooklyn. The two followed the movement generally of nineteenth-century people from rural to urban centers, and the peculiar trait of Walt and Gustave was their attempt to reconcile their rustic backgrounds with the opportunities provided them by their metropolitan locales. Neither could have succeeded in their chosen careers without the facilities of large cities, but their success derived in part from

critiquing those centers by confronting them with the "natural" qualities of the countryside. It is not the field and farmland that inspires their imagination, but the life of cities and the world of industry. Their exploitation of "nature" took the form of an aggressive expression of confrontation between the urban scene and the rural world they actually left behind. They played the hick to escape the bourgeois mindset, but stayed close to the city to enjoy its intellectual advantages. This required a refutation of conventional decorum through a mad show of egotism and ambition and a folding of their megalomaniacal temperaments into their art. It was on the basis of their respective *mètiers* that they projected themselves as saviors of the world.

This also explains the curious coincidence of their personas: the earthy, free-swinging independents shouting a "barbaric yawp over the rooftops." I shall never forget the flush of excitement I experienced when I juxtaposed the frontispiece of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*—the so-called "carpenter's portrait" based on a photograph taken on a hot July day in 1854—with Courbet's self-projection in *The Meeting* painted the same year and exhibited for the first time at the universal exposition of 1855.[8] Rakish, bearded, defiant, casually clothed in workman's costume, they identified themselves with the independent itinerant artisan. In their own time, critics mocked their "arrogant" postures and their rude flaunting of traditional decorum in both their work and their general attitude. Courbet accepts the reverence of his patron and his patron's servant and his patron's dog, depicting in the landscape one of "the roughs and beards and space and ruggedness and nonchalance that the soul loves."

It is true that Courbet has removed his hat in response to the salute of his patron, an act that would have been frowned upon by Whitman, who admonishes the reader in the preface of the original edition of *Leaves of Grass* to "take off your hat to nothing known or unknown or to any man or number of men." But in the picture Courbet remains master of the situation and it is clear that the deeper reverence is paid by the patron to the painter, and not vice versa, recalling Whitman's earlier statement in the preface on the forceful presence of the "common people" that induces the President of the United States to take "off his hat to them and not they to him."

Linda Nochlin has shown that Courbet's composition was based on a portion of a popular broadside of the Wandering Jew showing an encounter of the Jew with two burghers of a nearby town.[9] The legend of the shoemaker who mocked Christ on the way to Golgotha and was condemned to roam the earth unceasingly to expiate his sin underwent several permutations before culminating as a proletarian symbol in the nineteenth century.[10] The simple apocryphal tale of retribution and eternal wandering evolved into a socially conscious morality play for both the Left and the Right. For the Right the story became a warning—replete with anti-semitic denunciations—to the proletariat and middle-class reformers to stay in line, while for the French Left the artisanal sinner symbolized the persecuted worker and was emblematic of Masonic brotherhood, as in the famous novels, *Le Juif errant* by Eugène Sue and *La Comtesse de Rudolstadt* by George Sand, and the poem of the same title by Pierre de Béranger, all authors that Whitman particularly admired. Whitman's review of Sue's novel hailed it for gratifying emotions higher than "mere romance-loving curiosity."[11]

"I tramp a perpetual journey," declaimed our poet, and his identification with the "Hebraic" prophets and mystics places him squarely in the tradition of the leftist fraternal interpretation of the Wandering Jew.[12] His "right hand points to landscapes of continents, and a plain public road," emphasizing the accessibility to "each man and each woman" of their largest visions. Courbet drew upon the popular image for still another work, *The Apostle, Jean Journet, Setting off for the Conquest of Universal Harmony*, a portrait of an independent Fourierist missionary hitting the road to convert the world.[13] Beneath the lithographed version are appended verses beginning with the phrase "j'ai vu," launching a litany of social ills and reminiscent of Whitman's reiterative devices as in "I see the workings of battle, pestilence, tyranny, I see martyrs and prisoners . . . I observe the slights and degradations cast by arrogant persons upon the laborers, the poor, and upon negroes, and the like." Although Whitman's writing on Fourierism seems to be confined mainly to a somewhat jocular editorial for the New Orleans *Daily Crescent* in 1848,[14] his Messianic pose and call for frank sexuality contained many Fourierist and other utopian socialist elements derived from his contact with Frances Wright and his reading of her French counterpart, George Sand. The New Harmony projects of the Owenites in which Wright participated shared the concept of Fourier's self-contained agricultural community, also known as "Harmony." All of these thinkers stressed the creative potential of the popular classes—offering the paradigm of the independent artisan on a plane with the scholar and poet—from which crystallized the utopian socialist paradigm of the artisan-poet-prophet type taken up by Whitman and Courbet. They wanted to appear, like Jean Journet, as apostles of democracy, and as uncultivated artisans speaking sense with masculine vigor and unconstrained animality.

David Reynolds has pointed to the profound debt of Whitman to the social reformers of his day and the popular culture they exploited to reach the public.[15] To the literary texts may be added the popular imagery of his time that helped him forge his particular poetic structure—already anticipated in the humorous character sketches for the *Daily Crescent*. Both Whitman and Courbet fed on the sensational novel, book illustration, and humorous broadside to achieve a novel solution in the realm of high art opposed to academic and institutionalized formulae. They were disdainful of schools and teachers and orthodoxy of every kind, affecting the pose of the auto-didact and denying the influence of mentor and master. Courbet wrote letters to editors and printed disclaimers in his catalogues in an effort to demonstrate that his only masters were "nature and tradition, society and work." He feigned ignorance for effect, while thriving on elite knowledge and sophistication. Analogously, the erudite Whitman exults in the "indescribable freshness and unconsciousness" of the "illiterate person that humbles and mocks the power of the noblest expressive genius." This was consistent with their realist position and the deliberate rejection of the idealized and the artificialized. Their identification with the popular imagination, the childish and primitive expression, prompted their critics to label their works as vulgar, artless, and naive. They share a bourgeois status and plebeian self-consciousness in the metropolitan centers of New York and Paris during a period of momentous social struggles. Whitman scholars will recognize this common trait in Courbet's letter to a friend in 1850: "In our oh-so-civilized society it is necessary for me to lead the life of a savage; I must free myself even from governments. My sympathies are with the people, I must speak to them directly, take my science from them, and they must provide me with a living. To do that, I have just set out on the great, independent, vagabond life of the Bohemian."[16]

Perhaps the most striking material parallel in their respective careers is seen in their notorious manifestoes of 1855, *Leaves of Grass* and *The Atelier of the Painter: A Real Allegory Determining a Phase of Seven Years of My Artistic Life*. Operating on the margins of the establishment in their respective countries, they undertook at their own expense

to bring these works before the public. Whitman published his own book, and Courbet erected a large circus tent to show his rejected work in competition with the official international exposition. Whitman described his ultimate intention in *Leaves* as "a feeling or ambition to articulate and faithfully express in literary and poetic form, and uncompromisingly, my own physical, emotional, moral, intellectual, and aesthetic Personality, in the midst of, and tallying, the momentous spirit and facts of its immediate days, and of current America—and to exploit that Personality, identified with place and date, in a far more candid and comprehensive sense than any hitherto poem or book." Courbet wrote in his Realist Manifesto of 1855:

> I have studied, outside of all systems and without prejudice, the art of the ancients and the art of the moderns. I no more wanted to imitate the one than to copy the other . . . No! I simply wanted to draw forth from a complete acquaintance with tradition the reasoned and independent consciousness of my own individuality. To know in order to be able to create, that was my idea. To be in a position to translate the customs, the ideas, the appearance of my epoch, according to my own estimation; to be not only a painter, but a man as well; in short, to create living art—this is my goal.[17]

Whitman sings himself and celebrates himself with his full-length portrait around which the whole of humanity revolves. Courbet depicts himself as the central figure of his key monument in a private show set up to rival the art display of the 1855 exposition, which he explained in a letter to his patron as an attempt "to put [all of] society through my atelier." For both Whitman and Courbet their craft was a means of forging and preserving individuality, and at the same time, of creating a model for others to follow in the evolution of a new society. Their centrality in their frankly autobiographical projections is inseparable from their attempt at self-realization. Their megalomaniacal voice shouts above the rooftops in order to be heard above the din.[18] Near the end of his 1855 preface, Whitman proclaims in his self-appointed role as a social prophet, "An individual is as superb as a nation when he has the qualities which make a superb nation." Responding to an official bribe to persuade him to tone down his political radicalism, Courbet replied indignantly to the Surintendant des Beaux-Arts that he was a "Government, too," and challenged the Surintendant's government to find something appropriate for his own. He ended by claiming that he alone, of all his French contemporaries, had the ability to express and to translate in an original form both his personality and his social environment.[19]

Just as Whitman divided his work into occupational tasks, Courbet perceived his canvas as a series of vignettes depicting "society at its top, bottom, and middle. In a word, it is my way of seeing society in its interests and its passions. It is the world come to be painted at my place." Courbet insisted that the work had no title, but only a descriptive phrase to allow for the broadest possible interpretation. This is close to Whitman's approach in leaving the individual poems untitled and anonymous, but identifying the author in the main body of text. Courbet stated that the picture was divided into two parts with himself in the middle. To the right are all the "shareholders" in his enterprise, symbols of free love and friendship, as well as those who support, collect, and encourage his activity—the painter's "cameradoes." But Courbet wants to know and love his "dislikes" as well as his "likes." To the left are all those of the workaday world, the people, misery, poverty, wealth, the exploited, the exploiters, those who live on death and those who are victims of industrialization and urbanization. As in Whitman's opening verses of the poem that later became "I Sing the Body Electric,"

> 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.
> Was it dreamed whether those who corrupted their own live bodies could conceal themselves?
> And whether those who defiled the living were as bad as they who defiled the dead?

Courbet's parade includes rabbi and priest, a veteran of the French Revolution, a hunter, a reaper, a circus strongman, a clown, an old-clothes peddler, a make-worker and his wife, an undertaker, and an Irish mother nursing her child. I need not strain the patience of my audience here with reminders of Whitman's social catalogue, but perhaps a few lines will make the point:

> The woodman that takes his axe and jug with him shall take me with him all day.
> The farmboy ploughing in the field feels good at the sound of my voice,

In vessels that sail my words must sail . . . I go with fishermen and seamen, and love them,
My face rubs to the hunter's face when he lies down alone in his blanket,
The driver thinking of me does not mind the jolt of his wagon,
The young mother and old mother shall comprehend me,
The girl and the wife rest the needle a moment and forget where they are,
They and all would resume what I have told them.

We may linger a while longer on Whitman's use of the word "resume," a French term related to his "en masse" and his attempt to sum up the entire social spectrum as they focus within his egocentric lens. Whitman's use of French terms, despite his inability to read the language, has long been noted, but the use of "resume", from the French *résumé*, had a particular significance for him. In an essay on language written in 1856, Whitman included a kind of working glossary of 109 foreign terms—all but three French—which he felt should be "admitted to the homes of the common people" as a means of expanding thought and aspirations fit for a growing nation. One of these was "atelier," defined as a "Workshop; studio of an artist," and another was "resume" which he defined as "Last brief recapitulation."[20] He used the term *"résumé"* later in this historical sense in his letter on "The Spanish Element of Our Nationality," that posited a composite American, noting upon reflection that "there will not be found any more cruelty, tyranny, superstition . . . in the *résumé* of past Spanish history than in the corresponding *résumé* of Anglo-Norman history."[21] Without trying to find some arbitrary structural relationship between words in even a selective list, it still must be observed that they are key to understanding the social and historical implications of his magnum opus.

The double definition of atelier as workshop and artist's studio comprises the contradictions in his historical and social position: on the one hand, it allows him to identify creatively with "the noble character of the young mechanics and all free American workmen and workwomen," while on the other, he justifies his own independence by waxing more ambivalent on the confining, commercial ends of "The usual routine . . . the workshop, factory, yard, office, store, or desk." He asks us, his auditors, whether we have "reckoned" the wonders of the universe for practical gains, or have we "reckoned the landscape took substance and form that it might be painted in a picture? / Or men

and women that they might be written of, and songs sung?" Similarly, he faces a double bind in his use of the term "résumé" to imply the omniscient poet and cosmic seer, while at the same time pretending to express the spirit of his age and country in concrete images drawn from ordinary experience.

His French counterpart had to work through the same ambivalent feelings. Courbet's initial descriptive label for the picture which he submitted to the official jury in 1855 was "résumé d'études, de 1848 à 1855," that is, a résumé of his studies from the year of the 1848 Revolution to the year of the world's fair.[22] He uses the contradictory concept of "Real Allegory" to gloss his ability to transcend time and space while claiming to faithfully record his age. His creative personality is also opposed by his entrepreneurial side, implied in his use of his atelier as the setting of his picture. It may be recalled that atelier meant not only a studio, but also a workshop or small factory where artisanal activity of every kind was carried on under the direction of a chief called the patron. And what is Courbet producing in his atelier? A landscape, an artificial production removed from nature, or the prime source of realist inspiration. Has he not "reckoned the landscape" to achieve himself a position rather than as a subject expressing "the wonders that fill each minute of time forever?" The unlikely compound of allegory and reality is no less striking than the idea of leaflets and grass with its suggestion of pages of printed paper formed of organic processes.[23] Here Courbet and Whitman function as ingenious entrepreneurs justifying a novel artistic commodity by blurring the contradictions through stentorian "yawps" above the din and smoking chimneys of industrial enterprise.

Their breakthrough projects required a metaphorical recapitulation of the preceding years leading up to 1855 as a kind of justificatory statement. Courbet spells this out in his description, while Whitman confessed in the preface to the 1872 edition: "When I commenced, years ago, elaborating the plan of my poems, and continued turning over that plan, and shifting it in my mind through many years (from the age of twenty-eight to thirty-five), experimenting much, and writing and abandoning much, one deep purpose underlay the others, and has underlain it and its execution ever since—and that has been the religious purpose." Whitman tells us that his gestation period was identical to the seven-year phase of his French counterpart Courbet, although he would have to have dated its origin from before 31 May 1848. By "religious purpose" Whitman hardly means orthodoxy, but

the idea of "democracy *en masse*"—that is, the apostolic concept he shared with Courbet. It is in this period when both came to realize that their road to success was bound up with the commonplace and they located themselves squarely in the center of working-class institutions, family, customs, town and country. Not fortuitously, it was a period of counter-revolution in Europe when the worker and peasant were courted by savvy governments in the wake of violent insurrection from below, while in the United States the crisis over slavery, played out in connection with the newly annexed territories, engendered a burgeoning of propaganda aimed at the working classes in the free states. Whitman's editorial for the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, "American Workingmen, Versus Salvery," carries the urgent note of the impending crisis:

> We call upon every mechanic of the North, East, and West—upon the carpenter, in his rolled up sleeves, the mason with his trowel, the stonecutter with his brawny chest, the blacksmith with his sooty face, the brown fisted shipbuilder . . . upon shoemakers, and cartmen, and drivers, and paviers, and porters, and millwrights, and furriers, and ropemakers, and butchers, and machinists, and tinmen, and tailors, and hatters, and coach and cabinet makers—upon the honest sawyer and mortar-mixer too, whose sinews are their own—and every hardworking man—to speak in a voice whose great reverberations shall tell to all quarters that the *workingmen* of the free United States, and their business, are not willing to be put on the level of negro slaves, in territory which, if got at all, must be got by taxes sifted eventually through upon them, and by their hard work and blood.[24]

Less than four months later Whitman broke with the Hunker faction in the Democratic party over the issue, a move that would cost him his job but help him to discover his authorial voice in the appeal to the working classes.

Already he had shown his sympathy for the oppressed and starving Irish, and his solidarity with the French masses enabled him to foresee the downfall of the duplicitous Louis-Philippe: "In France, the smothered fires only wait the decay of the false one, the deceiver Louis Philippe, to burst forth in one great flame—not a flame, we ardently hope, like that of the old French Revolution—but one of a steady, healthy, pure brightness."[25] In the ensuing years, unemployment, short-term jobs, and entrepreneurial failure disclosed the fragility of

his middle-class existence and forced him to join his father's carpentry and building business until the recession of 1854.

But not before the revolutionary events in Europe and the slavery crisis at home opened the way for a missionary calling. The revolutions of 1848-1849 played a fundamental role in orienting his new direction, demonstrated in his poem "Resurgemus," a tribute to the defeated insurgents first published in the New York *Tribune* on 21 June 1850. The long second stanza links the recent revolutions to the exploitation of the working classes:

> God, 'twas delicious!
> That brief, tight, glorious grip
> Upon the throats of kings.
> You liars paid to defile the People,
> Mark you now:
> Not for numberless agonies, murders, lusts,
> For court thieving in its manifold mean forms,
> Worming from his simplicity the poor man's wages;
> For many a promise sworn by royal lips
> And broken, and laughed at in the breaking;
> Then, in their power, not for all these,
> Did a blow fall in personal revenge,
> Or a hair draggle in blood:
> The People scorned the ferocity of kings.

Although tyrants strut "grandly again" after doing their dirty work,

> Those corpses of young men,
> Those martyrs that hang from the gibbets,
> Those hearts pierced by the grey lead,
> Cold and motionless as they seem,
> Live elsewhere with undying vitality;
> They live in other young men, O kings,
> They live in brothers, again ready to defy you;
> They were purified by death,
> They were taught and exalted,
> Not a grave of those slaughtered ones,
> But is growing its seed of freedom,
> In its turn to bear seed,
> Which the winds shall carry afar and resow,
> And the rain nourish.

As all Whitman scholars know, the poem is unique in being the only previously published work that Whitman included in *Leaves of Grass*, testifying to its importance in his thought. Revolutionary in content, it is also novel for its disregard of the metrical regularity of conventional verse and for pointing to the beginnings of a new "free verse" which foreshadows his mature style. By the third edition, the poem acquired the title, "Europe: the 72d and 73d Years of These States," affirming its connection with the 1848 uprisings and in turn identifying it with his own nationalism.

Significantly, I think, Whitman's "Resurgemus" is deeply related to his self-image of poet-hero who confounds life and art. In his address to the Brooklyn Art Union in 1851 Whitman argued that the most effective art is one that is politically engaged. He sees the great rebels such as Kossuth and Mazzini not only as artists changing the world through their action but as makers of their own creative existence. He advises the young art student to place less emphasis on the Old Masters than on the "higher school" of "all grand actions and grand virtues, of heroism, of the death of captives and martyrs—of all the mighty deeds written in the pages of history—deeds of daring, and enthusiasm, and devotion, and fortitude. Above all, the novice should read "how slaves have battled against their oppressors—how the bullets of tyrants have, since the first king ruled, never been able to put down the unquenchable thirst of man for his rights." Whitman then concluded his address with eighteen lines of "Resurgemus," including those already quoted.[26] As in the case of his French alter ego, Whitman based his radical persona on his heightened understanding of social relations in the wake of the 1848 revolutions.

Whitman first learned of the Paris uprising in New Orleans, where he had gone to take a job on the newspaper *The Crescent* after being fired at the *Eagle*. He could not have been in a more appropriate location to share the excitement of the event. The news was received with wild enthusiasm in both the large French population and by a multitude of refugees from other parts of Europe. There were banquets and rallies for universal freedom (read European whites, that is; later news that the French government had liberated its slaves in the colonies was received with hostility), and the *Crescent*—which ran ads for slavers—printed the text of the *Marseillaise*. The "springtime of the people" proved to be a memorable one for Whitman, as it coincided with his cosmopolitan development and initiation into the vastness of the American continent. His involvement with European revolution

and his growing nationalist sentiment grew apace.[27]

The mind that waxed ecstatic over the news from France had been primed by the same French literature that nourished Courbet. There is no need to reiterate the arguments of several Whitman scholars who have analyzed his close dependence on Sand, Michelet, Sue, and Béranger for the invention of his persona.[28] No one seriously contests Whitman's debt to Sand, whose social novels *Consuelo, Comtesse de Rudolstadt, Spiridion*, and *The Journeyman Joiner* (whose hero is a carpenter and proletarian saint) all centered on artist-prophets who reject orthodoxy and draw their inspiration from the common people. (He may also have identified with her mentor, Pierre Leroux, a former compositor and founder of the Saint-Simonist newspaper, *Le Globe*, and notorious for his unkemptness. Leroux's belief in metempsychosis inspired one basic theme in the whole cycle of Sand's social novels and may have been yet another source of ideas for Whitman, who similarly defined immortality as metempsychosis.) Whitman admitted his profound admiration for Sand, giving her the same unrestrained praise he bestowed upon Frances Wright. On the *Consuelo* and its sequel, *The Comtesse de Rudolstadt*, he told Traubel: "I have always treasured it: read, read, read—never tiring. The book is a masterpiece: truly a masterpiece: the noblest work left by George Sand—the noblest in many respects, on its own field, in all literature."[29]

According to Gay Wilson Allen, Jules Michelet's *The People* "contains every major idea of Whitman's philosophy of democracy, religion and art."[30] When Michelet writes in his preface, "This is more than a book; it is myself, therefore it belongs to you . . . Receive then, this book of *The People*, because it is you, because it is I," he could have been speaking for both Courbet and Whitman. Michelet derides the romantics for having overlooked the "sacred poetry" of the people, and now boldly speaks up for them himself: "And I, who have sprung from them,—I who have lived, toiled, and suffered with them—who, more than any other have purchased the right to say that I know them,—I come to establish against all mankind the personality of the people."[31] This corresponds to a passage that Whitman copied from the *Comtesse de Rudolstadt* which included the following line: "It was the soul of the whole of humanity that spoke to you through mine."[32]

What makes Whitman's involvement with the writings and reformist sensibilities of Sand, Michelet and Béranger so compelling is that all three were linked through friendship and their shared utopianism.

They cite each other in their works and correspondence with sympathy and admiration. Together they made formidable contributions to the intellectual and popular ferment that preceded the revolution of 1848. Courbet knew the work of all three, as well as that of Pierre Leroux, and based one of his early paintings on Sand's novel *Consuelo*.[33] Courbet's friends Champfleury, the worker-poet Pierre Dupont, and the philosopher Proudhon were in direct contact with Sand, Béranger, and Michelet. One of the most important documents of early French Realism is Champfleury's long letter to George Sand describing Courbet's private exhibition of 1855.[34]

Thus we see more than a temperamental affinity in the work and thought of Whitman and Courbet.[35] Their imaginative backgrounds, so to speak, were formed by a common intellectual heritage. Now I want to proceed to the next step and inquire whether or not there was a large constellation or network of ideas that linked them across space, akin to their own self-projections. I want to argue that this is the heritage of the French Revolution with which they both identified. Their insistence on forging their own individuality, on basing their careers on this notion in opposition to parental pressures, class hostility, and lack of formal training, is one significant outcome of the French Revolution. Although Whitman gained his understanding of the French Revolution mainly through texts, both he and Courbet experienced the connection directly through their families: Courbet's grandfather was a veteran of the revolution and had fought on the side of the *sans-culottes*, and his reward of lands confiscated from church and nobility laid the basis of the family fortune. Whitman's father was actually born on Bastille Day, 14 July 1789.[36] Walter, Jr. could literally claim status as a child of the Revolution! Indeed, Whitman's poem, "France, the 18th Year of these States," uses the French term for female spouse, "ma femme," to define his relation to France and liberty, and in "Calamus" the same phrase symbolizes his attachment to democracy itself. Every 14 July Whitman would have associated his father with the French Revolution, a paternal association emphasized in his poetic greeting to the French people on the occasion of the Paris Exposition of 1889: "We grand-sons and great-grand-sons do not forget your grand-sires."[37] Whitman recalled that his father had been a friend of Tom Paine and an ardent admirer of Lafayette, and Walt's childhood encounter with Lafayette at a cornerstone-laying ceremony on 4 July 1825 assumed a symbolic significance that decisively shaped his life. Drinking a rhetorical toast to France on Bastille Day 1888—and hence his father's birthday—Whitman declaimed: "What America

did for the Fourth, France did for the Fourteenth: both acts were of the same stock." And Traubel noted the vehemence with which he concluded: "Here's thanks to the old revolution and death to all new Bastiles[sic]!"[38]

The day before, Whitman told Traubel that he "never had the common Puritan ideas about France: I have long considered the French in some ways the top of the heap."[39] Indeed, throughout the conversations Whitman outspokenly expresses his lifelong sympathy with France and its contribution to his cultural formation. On several occasions he decries the American stereotype of French people, and looks to the Parisian as the paradigm of "the best democrat, the perfect man."[40] In learning of Wagner's hostile reception in Paris, Whitman observed that "it is remarkable how deeply certain forms, habits, niceties, of civilization enter into the French character—its life: yet is a thing not to be reckoned without: all that is part of the cosmos." Then, pausing, as if acknowledging the connection with *Leaves* he added: "You know I love the French; do not forget that."[41]

Whitman's francophilia attested to a particular political attitude. An aggressive pro-French position at mid-century implied support of social democracy and the popular classes against aristocracy and privilege. Whitman looked to France and French writers for models in his attempt to liberate his moral and political consciousness. In his moving poem, "O Star of France," written in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune, Whitman affirms his personal identification with the French Revolution:

> Dim smitten star,
> Orb not of France alone, pale symbol of my soul, its dearest hopes,
> The struggle and the daring, rage divine for liberty,
> Of aspirations toward the far ideal, enthusiast's dreams of brotherhood,
> Of terror to the tyrant and the priest.

He may have been writing for his transatlantic counterpart Courbet, famous victim of the Commune, when he concluded the poem:

> The travail o'er, the long-sought extrication,
> When lo! reborn, high o'er the European world,
> (In gladness answering thence, as face afar to face, reflecting our Columbia,)

Again thy star O France, fair lustrous star,
In heavenly peace, clearer, more bright than ever,
Shall beam immortal.

Whitman's profound attachment to the French Revolution disposed him to accept it in its entirety, including the period known as the Terror, a position alien to many historians both here and abroad in this bicentenary year 1989. In his *Eagle* editorial for 21 January 1847, he noted that it was on this date that Louis XVI was guillotined, a wild, bloody act to be sure, but one that "did not half equal the horror of the long train of *quiet* outrage and wretchedness which millions had endured."[42] Two months later, in his review of Hazlitt's biography of Napoleon, he repeated this idea and admonished the reader to see the so-called "horror" of the French Revolution in context and to be wary of the Siren's lure of the "conservative sing-song":

> We too dread the horrors of the sword and of violence—of bloodshed and a murdered people. But we would rather at this moment over every kingdom on the continent of Europe, that the people should rise and enact the same prodigious destructions as those of the French Revolution, could they thus root out the kingcraft and priestcraft which are annually dwindling down humanity there to a lower and lower average—an appalling prospect ahead for anyone who thinks ahead! Moreover, when it is observed how deeply the fangs of that kingcraft are fixed—and how through-and-through the virus of that priestcraft is infused—it will make one come nigh to think that only some great retching of the social and political structure can achieve the blessed consummation.[43]

Here it can be flatly stated that the same literary anticlericalism that informed Courbet's works—Sand, Fourier, Leroux, Michelet, and Béranger—enabled Whitman to make linkages and conjectures relating to the seething discontent of his peers across the Atlantic.

Whitman's justification for the entire French Revolution was affected by the position of his first intellectual hero, Frances Wright.[44] Wright consistently exposed herself to the wrath of New York conservatives in her outspoken alliance with the French Revolution and its surviving veterans and more recent exiles "who drank their inspiration from the heroes of '89." Following her lecture of 31 January 1829 she replied to her critics:

> Know the citizens of New-York, who fathered the French Revolution of '89, thus upheld in their daily journals to execration and opprobrium? The virtuous, the venerable, the venerated Lafayette. Know they the principles then proclaimed, and to which a Baillie [sic], a La Rochefoucauld, a Condorcet, a Madame Roland, set the seal of their blood? They were the same signed by a Franklin, an Adams, a Jefferson, and all the worthies of '76. They were the same to which the people of this land stand pledged in life, poverty, and honor.[45]

While Wright condemns Robespierre as a religious fanatic akin to her clerical critics, she insists that "all the horrors acted in France, subsequent to the bright dawn of the revolution," resulted from a populace goaded "to frenzy by the subtle emissaries of the British ministry, and by the hired incendiaries of a discomfited court, aristocracy, and priesthood"—in short, the counterrevolutionaries. Nine years later American newspapers could blame her for "diffusing the worst principles of the French revolution through this land of the Puritan Fathers." And as late as 1848, in her book *England the Civilizer*, she wrote that for all its horrors, the French Revolution remained the most wonderful political drama ever enacted and one of the great steps toward human emancipation in mind and body.[46]

Given the common intellectual heritage of Whitman and Courbet, and the astonishing similarity in their personality types, we may now proceed to the last stage in my argument in which I, the omniscient author, having transcended time and space, try to frame the discussion in a wider context. It seems clear that in some Newtonian sense wherein certain conditions get certain responses, a scientist might refer to the "initial conditions" in the careers of Whitman and Courbet. Granted their differing geographical and hereditary origins, they shared the weight of a certain intellectual baggage belonging to a network of ideas in circulation. Their public reception was similar because the persona they projected veered dangerously close to the revolutionary threat posed against bourgeois society in their respective countries. Although both pretended to speak for their nations, their notion of the state expressed itself through an aggressive assertion of the rights of the popular majority by magnifying their own personalities as a kind of wide screen for the projection of humanity. They used their voices in behalf of the people, and their inclusionary effort pitted them against the hostile elite. The unity of their consciousness was forged through their radical politics, prepared by the French Revolution and reaching

its climax in the 1848. It would be naive not see their actions as part of an entrepreneurial risk, but it would be equally naive not to see their actions as part of their realist concern with positioning themselves within a certain community. What gave their authorial voice power was precisely this realism—their acceptance of the widest range of political and social experience.

It is now possible to see as one outcome of the American and French Revolutions the rise of the independent creator, the auto-didact who wishes to free her or himself from illegitimate authority. Whitman, one of the "roughs," and Courbet, "maître-peintre," assumed the pose of the self-taught, literate artisan. Both read deeply into contemporary science and sometimes pseudo-science to liberate themselves from orthodoxy and nourish their particular brand of realism.[47] They went outside academic, political, and literary establishments in their attempt to empower themselves to empower others, identifying with a kind of pantheism that recognizes the Godhead, or good, in everything and everyone, in their likes as well as their dislikes. To break from authority meant realizing their freedom with the kind of "retching" effort Whitman spoke of in his *Eagle* review on Hazlitt, and they meant to serve as a paradigm for everyone to follow. Their boastful brand of self-respect carried with it respect for the underdog.

Is it possible to assume that culture after 1848 was far more international and intertextual than we generally imagine it? Certainly all Whitman scholars acknowledge his profound reliance on foreign sources, but understand this dependence mainly as grist for the national mill. So often viewed as the embodiment of Emerson's ideal of the liberating national poet—indeed, as the quintessential American writer—it would now seem that in Whitman we all got more than we bargained for. For in the end, how do we explain Whitman's weird transatlantic *Doppelgänger*? What made a Whitman also made a Courbet. I believe their existence forces us to ask hard questions about the way scholars contextualize their subjects in terms of specific nationality. Perhaps we have too much limited our methodological questioning of the conditions out of which cultural production springs? Whatever special coloring their differing nationalities gave to Courbet and Whitman, they were conditioned by an international cultural context. Two distinct, yet similar artists draw upon the same sources for their own national identities. In his open letter to German artists reflecting his disillusionment in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War, Courbet identified himself both as a Franc-Comtois

and an "American of France," a sign of his individual autonomy and his universality as against the narrowness of Bonapartism and Bismarckism.[48] Thus what I am questioning here is not only the canon of scholarly production, but the validity of the criteria of the canon.

I take it that my presence in this public symposium implies a need for literary scholars and art historians to go beyond the narrowly construed discipline boundaries. I confess to a desire for reconciliation of different nationalities in this Bicentennial year of the French Revolution. I confess to a perception of hopeful signs of decentralization amid the crisis of Western culture, a realignment that perhaps foretells the end of chauvinist nationalism, racism, and gender bias. Would that today's symposium be one fact among a myriad of facts in a rallying of international culture, as we enlarge the scope of our democratic vista to allow for other equally valid vistas around the globe and give real meaning to those grand terms liberty and equality!

Hiking in what was for me the uncharted territory known as "Whitman Land" required the steady support and patience of several experienced guides who have my deepest gratitude: Gay Wilson Allen, Ruth L. Bohan, Laura Meixner, David S. Reynolds, and Roberta K. Tarbell. I am also grateful to the following cameradoes who accompanied me, at least part of the way, through the woods and over the rocks: Sanda Agalidi, Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, Margaret Iverson, Michael Orwicz, and Vince Pecora who helped me formulate the basic issues of my paper.

NOTES

[1] This is not to say that they have not been linked; but only to observe the lack of a systematic attempt to make sense of their obvious affinities. The first to notice their similarities was James Jackson Jarves who described Whitman as "an American Courbet in verse." See J.J. Jarves, *Art-Thoughts*, New York, 1869, p. 274. I owe this reference to Laura Meixner, who permitted me to read the section of her manuscript for her forthcoming book devoted to Courbet's reception in America: L.L. Meixner, *Culture and Criticism: American Responses to French Realism and Impressionism*, Chapter 3. Courbet's American audience is also discussed in D.E. Edelson, "Courbet's Reception in America Before 1900," in S. Faunce and L. Nochlin, *Courbet Reconsidered*, The Brooklyn Museum, New Haven and London, pp. 67-75, 231-234. In more recent times, Max Kozloff has insightfully observed a parallel between Whitman and Courbet. See M. Kozloff, "Walt Whitman and American Art," in E.H. Miller, ed., *The Artistic Legacy of Walt Whitman: A Tribute to Gay Wilson Allen*, New York, 1970, p. 32.

[2] Faunce and Nochlin, *Courbet Reconsidered*, 66; Nochlin, "The Origin without an Original," *October*, No. 37, 1986, pp. 77-86.

[3] Faunce and Nochlin, Nos. 50-51, 75-76.

[4] W. Whitman, "Specimen Days," *Complete Prose Works*, Philadelphia, 1897, p. 95.

[5] After systematically perusing the Courbet literature in preparation for this essay, I was astonished to come upon John Burrough's description of "Whitman Land"—a place that eerily resonated with my recent journey through "Courbet Land": "I call this place Whitman Land, because in many ways it is typical of my poet,—an amphitheatre of precipitous rock, slightly veiled with a delicate growth of verdure, enclosing a few acres of prairie-like land, once the site of an ancient lake, now a garden of unknown depth and fertility. Elemental ruggedness, savageness, and grandeur, combined with wonderful tenderness, modernness, and geniality. There rise the gray scarred cliffs, crowned here and there with a dead hemlock or pine, where, morning after morning, I have seen the bald-eagle perch and here at their feet this level area of tender humus, with three perennial springs of delicious cold water flowing in its margin; a huge granite bowl filled with the elements and potencies of life." J. Burroughs, *Whitman, A Study*, Boston and New York, 1896, p. 1. Whatever else one may say about the comparison of Whitman with French painters, no one could ever claim that this was a description of "Millet Land"!

[6] Faunce and Nochlin, No. 44.

[7] Whitman, *Complete Prose Works*, pp. 89-90. Slightly later, in a section entitled "Trees I am familiar with here," he mentions an oak, "one sturdy old fellow, vital, green, bushy, five feet thick at the butt, I sit under every day."

[8] In one rumor circulating throughout Paris drawing rooms it was asserted "that Courbet was a carpenter or a builder's mason who, one fine day, driven by his genius, began to paint and then produced masterpieces at the first attempt." P. Courthion, ed., *Courbet raconté par lui-même et par ses amis*. 2 vols., Geneva, 1948, I, 98.

[9] L. Nochlin, "Gustave Courbet's *Meeting*: A Portrait of the Artist as a Wandering Jew," *Art Bulletin*, vol. 49, 1967, pp. 209-222.

[10] R. Auguet, *Le juif errant, genèse d'une légende*, Paris, 1977, pp. 131-156.

[11] Cited in J.J. Rubin, *The Historic Whitman*, University Park and London, 1973, p. 169.

[12] H. Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden, April 8—September 14, 1889*, ed. G. Traubel, Carbondale, Illinois, 1964, p. 368.

[13] M. Schapiro, "Courbet and Popular Imagery, An Essay on Realism and Naivete," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 4, 1941, pp. 167-168.

[14] W. Whitman, "Fourierism," in *The Uncollected Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman*, 2 vols., ed. E. Holloway, New York, 1932, I, 229.

[15] D.S. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville*, New York, 1988, pp. 92, 104-107.

[16] Courthion, *Courbet raconté par lui-même*, II, 78.

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61. This also comes close to Whitman's later reflections in "A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads," where he declares that *Leaves* represented "an attempt, from first to last, to put a *Person*, a human being (myself, in the latter half of the Nineteenth Century, in America) freely, fully and truly on record." W. Whitman, *Two Prefaces*, intro. C. Morley, New York, 1926, pp. 65-66.

[18] Courbet signed his paintings with the largest signature of any French artist in the nineteenth century, while Whitman so delighted in writing his own name "that he repeats it over and over: 'It never tires me.'" R.M. Bucke, "Portraits of Walt Whitman," *The New England Magazine*, n.s., Vol. 20, March 1899, p. 35.

[19] Courthion, *Courbet raconté par lui-même*, II, 79-84.

[20] W. Whitman, "America's Mightiest Inheritance," in *New York Dissected*, eds. E. Holloway and R. Adimari, New York, 1936, pp. 60-65.

[21] Whitman, *Complete Prose Works*, p. 387.

[22] Paris, Archives Nationales F21 520 (Notice des ouvrages, No. 5840).

[23] David Reynolds notes the connection between Whitman's *Leaves* and the French term for the episodic newspaper serial novel which appeared at the bottom part of journals, *feuilleton*, whose root is *feuille*, meaning leaf, page, and newspaper. American writers of sensational novels, like their French counterparts, were called "feuilletonistes," a term Whitman found suggestive for his writing. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance*, p. 316. Of course, as a journalist and newspaper editor Whitman would have been used to thinking in terms of "leaves," an actual unit of newspaper production. It should be noted here as well the links between realism and journalism in the nineteenth century: in the case of Whitman it is clear, but Courbet also was fascinated by newspapers which he subscribed to in abundance and he often wrote letters to editors of newspapers or otherwise found an outlet for his views through the articles of his journalist friends. I owe this information to Petra Ten-Doesschate Chu. For Whitman and the newspaper world see especially S.F. Fishkin, *From Fact to Fiction: Journalism and Imaginative Writing in America*, Baltimore and London, 1985, pp. 13-51.

[24] W. Whitman, *The Gathering of the Forces*, 2 vols., ed. C. Rodgers and J. Black, New York and London, 1920, I, 210-211.

[25] *Ibid.*, I, 30.

[26] W. Whitman, "Art and Artist," *The Uncollected Poetry and Prose*, pp. 241-247.

[27] For the impact of these events on contemporary American intellectuals see the introduction of M.P. Rogin, *Subversive Genealogy: The Politics and Art of Herman Melville*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1983, pp. ix-x, 19-21; L.J. Reynolds, *European Revolutions and the American Literary Renaissance*, New Haven and London, 1988, pp. 1-18, 125-152.

[28] See especially E. Shephard, *Walt Whitman's Pose*, New York, 1938; G.W. Allen, *The New Walt Whitman Handbook*, New York and London, 1986, pp. 265-270; B. Erkkila, *Walt Whitman Among the French: Poet and Myth*, Princeton, N.J., 1980.

[29] H. Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden, November 1, 1988—January 20, 1889*, New York, 1914, pp. 422-423.

[30] G.W. Allen, "Walt Whitman and Jules Michelet," *Etudes anglaises*, vol. 1, May 1937, p. 232; Erkkila, *Walt Whitman Among the French*, pp. 26-27.

[31] J. Michelet, *The People*, trans. C. Cocks, London, 1846, p. 9.

[32] Cited in Shephard, *Walt Whitman's Pose*, p. 178.

[33] Arts Council of Great Britain, *Gustave Courbet 1819-1877*, London, 1978, p. 12.

[34] Champfleury, "Sur M. Courbet: Lettre à Madame Sand," *Le réalisme*, Paris, 1857, pp. 270-285.

[35] Thus far I have not reached the idea of a direct relationship, this being less pertinent to my present aim. In my own mind, however, I have no doubt that they were aware of one another as early as the 1860s. The first major review of Whitman in a French journal used the term "rowdy" to describe the poet's impact on the American public, and defined it in the sense of disorder, lack of good taste, lawlessness, rejection of authority and puritanism, as "the barbarian born in the very entrails of the Union, the savage in white skin," the apostle of the ugly and of the religion of the flesh—the exact terms used by hostile contemporary critics to characterize Courbet. The reviewer also comments on Whitman's persona of the charismatic creator facing the breakers of the sea which beckon to him, and calls him "a pantheist and a Saint-Simonian," and "adventurer of California and a bourgeois of New York." See L. Etienne, "Walt Whitman, poète, philosophe et 'rowdy'," *Revue européenne*, vol. 18, 1861, pp. 104-117. The next major study of Whitman in French is found in a volume that includes a review of the Salon of 1872 in which the critic condemns the jury for blocking Courbet's submission because of his participation in the Commune—a fact reported widely in American newspapers of the period. See T. Bentzon, "Un poète americain, Walt Whitman," *Revue des deux mondes*, ser. 8, vol. 99, May-June 1872, pp. 564-582; E. Duvergier de Hauranne, "Le Salon de 1872," ibid., p. 832. Courbet's notoriety in the United States (his work first exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1859)—second only to Millet's—and Whitman's remarkable familiarity with the entire spectrum of French painters would have made it certain that the poet knew the painter. In addition, Whitman's friends and disciples, such as Thomas Eakins and Sadakichi Hartmann, were familiar with Courbet's work. Hartmann referred to Courbet as one of those who "slapped the public's face with their debuts." See S. Hartmann, *A History of American Art*, 2 vols., Boston, 1909, II, 277.

[36] J. Kaplan, *Walt Whitman, A Life*, New York, 1980, pp. 56-57.

[37] John Burroughs traced his friend's conceptual sources to the French Revolution: "We must look for the origins of Whitman, I think, in the deep world-currents that have been shaping the destinies of the race for the past hundred years or more; in the universal loosening, freeing, and removing obstructions; in the emancipation of the people, and their coming forward and taking possession of the world in their own right; in the triumph of democracy and of science; the downfall of kingcraft and priestcraft . . ." Burroughs, *Whitman*, p. 231.

[38] H. Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden, March 28—July 14, 1888*, New York, 1915, p. 467.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 461.

[40] *With Walt Whitman in Camden, April 8—September 14, 1889*, p. 385.

[41] *With Walt Whitman in Camden, January 21 to April 7, 1889*, Philadelphia, 1953, p. 427.

[42] *The Gathering of the Forces*, I, 109-110.

[43] *Ibid.*, II, 285-287.

[44] For Whitman's attraction to Wright see G.W. Allen, *The Solitary Singer, A Critical Biography of Walt Whitman*, New York, 1967, pp. 29-30.

[45] F. Wright, "Reply to the Traducers of the French Reformers of the Year 1789," in *Course of Popular Lectures*, New York, 1829, pp. 228-230.

[46] C.M. Eckhardt, *Fanny Wright: Rebel in America*, Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1984, pp. 265, 279.

[47] Both were fascinated with somnambulism and trance-like states: see Courbet's portrait of *The Clairvoyant* or *The Sleepwalker* (ca. 1855) and his repeated motif of sleep (Faunce and Nochlin, No. 28) and Whitman's "I am a look—mystic—in a trance—exaltation / Something wild and untamed—half savage" (W. Whitman, *Notes and Fragments Left by Walt Whitman*, ed. R.M. Bucke, London and Ontario, Canada, 1899, p. 40) and the poet's own repeated allusions to dreams, sleep, and exalted states.

[48] *Courbet raconté par lui-même*, II, 137.