

Though Whitman's fame increased dramatically, a salient point which Willard skirts is that as a spokesman for the common man, ironically, Whitman was scarcely known by the vast majority of Americans. Though slightly familiar for "O Captain! My Captain!," and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," his reputation was still in the hands of scholars and literary circles.

Willard's book provides valuable insights into the development of Whitman's poetry and raises significant questions about the origin of the genius and his permanent acceptance as a poet-prophet. Because the book was written in 1950, today's reader is left uninformed due to its rather limited scope. Nevertheless, it is a valuable reference source and does hint at the possibility of Whitman as a poetic poseur. Enthusiastic and thorough, Willard regards Whitman as a "spectacular writer" whose place has been firmly secured in American literature.

— Kathy Blake

THE ARTISTIC LEGACY OF WALT WHITMAN, ed. by Edwin Haviland Miller. N.Y.: New York University Press, 1970.

*The Artistic Legacy of Walt Whitman* is a collection of essays presented at the Walt Whitman Celebration held at NYU in April of 1969. Commemorating the 150th anniversary of Whitman's birth, the final speaker was Gay Wilson Allen, considered the "dean" of Whitman scholars and the one to whom Edwin Haviland Miller dedicated this book, ascribing to it the subtitle, "A Tribute to Gay Wilson Allen."

The book consists of six essays and 35 illustrations which include canvases and sculpture by major modern American artists, and the most famous photographs of Whitman. Essays by Ned Rorem, Max Kozloff and Robert Duncan cover Whitman's impact on music, art and literature respectively.

The most captivating article in the collection is the essay by Edwin Haviland Miller, "The Radical Vision of Whitman and Pollock." The similarities of artistic vision made evident by Miller illumine the work of both artists and their contributions to American art.

Beginning with the reception both artists received from their contemporary audiences (both were considered outrageous and incapable of following conventions because of a lack of talent), Miller explains why their art appeared so radical. "In his desire to maintain his vulnerable security in an uncertain and contradictory world, man wants the comforts that the dogmas of convention accord, the illusion of order that existing forms provide against impending chaos, and a manageable and familiar size and scale that poses no threat to his feelings of dominancy." (p. 56)

Like Whitman, Pollock was revolutionary in the presentation of his artistic vision, abandoning convention for the truer "hidden order of art" in the unconscious. Both artists possess a childlike quality which recognizes the "continual flux, the ceaseless changing which has its own order. They are in one sense artists of dissolution and in another sense harbingers of a synthesis struggling for birth." (p. 61)

Miller considers both Walt Whitman and Jackson Pollock to have been solitary singers whose art forms lacked the vehicles for the expression of their individual voices, making them "orphans in art as well as in life." (p. 65) The meditative quality of their work dwells on the "inner landscape," fusing elements both male and female into an androgynous unity that has given to American art a delicacy of expression that is emotional as well as mental.

Gay Wilson Allen's contribution to this collection is an informative and entertaining history of the growing iconography that captured Walt Whitman in hundreds of photographs, making him, with the possible exception of Mark Twain, America's most photographed writer. The abundance of Whitman photographs is partly due to the fact that Whitman was "remarkably photogenic," but also suggests that Whitman's close relationship with the history of photography somehow influenced his concept of himself. Allen contends, "Although I am not ready to propose the thesis that the camera gave Whitman his 'identity,' I do believe that both cameras and graphic artists gave him images of himself which influenced the symbolic role he struggled to develop for himself as a 'poet-prophet.'" (p. 128)

Following this conjecture, Allen presents a history of the daguerreotype's arrival in America and Whitman's obvious knowledge of its establishment in New York. The earliest daguerreotype of Whitman

is said to have been taken in Woodbury, New York, in the summer of 1840, when Whitman was teaching school there. According to Professor Allen that date is improbable, though not impossible. Though the Woodbury daguerreotype has been lost, another taken around the same time, the earliest known, is in the Whitman House in Camden, New Jersey. This portrait of Whitman taken before his "metamorphosis" shows "a supercilious young man with a neat beard—without moustache—wearing a fashionable coat and hat, a foulard tie, fondling a walking cane. He himself is obviously impressed by his natty appearance." (p. 130)

One of the more famous daguerreotypes is the engraved frontpiece of the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. This was probably taken in 1854 by Gabriel Harrison. Taken outside on a hot July day, Allen speculates how difficult it must have been to have held such a rigid pose without support for the length of time it took the image to impress, and yet this engraving from the Harrison daguerreotype "would become known as the first Whitman icon." (p. 131)

By 1860 photography replaced daguerreotypography and Mathew Brady's gallery on Broadway in New York became a showplace of photographs of famous people collected as a tribute to social history. Brady also had a gallery in Washington by 1862 and photographed Whitman at the height of his Civil War service.

In 1869 the famous "Moses picture" was taken by Frank Pearsall and later became one of the most widely published photos of Whitman. Allen comments on the mystical suggestion of this photo and several others taken about the same time by apparently the same artist.

Allen retells the story of the Philadelphia firm of Phillip and Taylor's legendary shot of Whitman in Ocean Grove, New Jersey, with a butterfly perched on his finger. This was used as a frontpiece for his 1889 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, much to the delight of the romantic minded, who saw a "poet so close to nature, butterflies landed on his outstretched arms." The truth became apparent when Esther Shepard discovered a cardboard butterfly in one of the poet's notebooks in the Library of Congress.

George C. Cox took the portrait Whitman called "the laughing philosopher" on April 15, 1887, in New York. Cox was one of Amer-

ica's great photographers of the 19th century, and photographed many famous people, though he only copyrighted two photos, both of Whitman. These he later sold to raise money for the sick and aging poet.

In trying to publicize Whitman in the early 1900's, several sculptures, murals and other artifacts were created. The Walt Whitman Hotel, built in Camden, New Jersey in 1926, commissioned two Philadelphia artists to paint the murals. The largest in the main lobby was created by Robert E. Johnson and was a highly symbolic portrayal of Whitman charging men and women with his spiritual power. This mural has since been destroyed.

Allen mentions the commercialized versions of Whitman that have appeared in the mid and later 1900's. Along with several caricatures, Allen feels a gross misrepresentation is produced by commercial art, and cites the cover of Signet's *Leaves of Grass* as an example. Several of Whitman's poems have been illustrated, the most famous being Jacob Epstein's illustrations of the "Calamus" poems.

*The Artistic Legacy of Walt Whitman* is completed with a bibliography of Gay Wilson Allen which includes a listing of books, chapters or reprinted selections in books, articles and reviews.

— Jessica Chielli

WALT WHITMAN: A LIFE, by Justin Kaplan. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980.

Justin Kaplan's sympathetic biography, *Walt Whitman: A Life*, attempts to trace those forces which shaped Whitman, forces which made him the foremost of all American poets. Kaplan, admittedly, fails to isolate the creative surge that fueled *Leaves of Grass* in the 1850's. He does, however, realize a portrait of Whitman as very much the quintessential American who sought to purge his poetic style and poetic subject matter of European trappings. Still, Kaplan judges Whitman as the "Supreme American inheritor of Romanticism," and he makes this judgment despite Whitman's having skinned his poetry of readily identifiable influences. Whitman, like the Romantics, concentrated upon self, the celebration and reenactment of the process "of becoming." Kaplan writes that "*Leaves of Grass* was to celebrate