DHQ: Digital Humanities Quarterly
2023
Volume 17 Number 1

Whitman Tracked Between Editions, Rossetti as a Complex Subversive, and the Collective Sense of Authorship: A Mixed Methods Accounting of a Hyperlinked “Calamus”

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Abstract

I examine the influence of one literary text upon another by the open-source programming methodology of information science. In particular, I look at how the “Calamus” sequence as rendered in the 1867 *Leaves of Grass* may be understood to be topically present, although most of the sequence was removed and regrouped by William Michael Rossetti toward publishing the first British Whitman edition in the 1868 *Poems by Walt Whitman*. I further demonstrate the complement of theory testing as I examine the laudatory and cautionary nature of the “Calamus” poems. Those celebrations and reservations about loving out of bounds may at once apply either to the radical inclusivity of a new republic or in same-sex love. While the utility of that laud-caution categorization remains tenuous, looking at both the limitations and strengths of the approach demonstrate the utility of employing a non-linear, even hypertextual sensibility readily available to readers who wish to encounter the social cognitive terrain of a literary work. On that terrain, I argue, readers can better understand a mind produced in time and responding to its time.

In editing *Poems by Walt Whitman* (1868) for a British readership, William Michael Rossetti strode the line between censorship and advocacy, as well as that between an enabling and co-opted subversion. That Hotten edition removed about one-half of *Leaves of Grass* (1867) — including what would become “Song of Myself” — toward making possible Whitman’s broader circulation in the United Kingdom. *Poems* was praised by the *Saturday Review* for bringing forth *the comely* after removal of the *indescribably filthy* [Whitley 2020]. That *Poems* was published at all, and continued to be published into the 20th century, remains remarkable in a British publishing culture that allowed officials to seize an entire press run before either the author or publisher appeared in court to argue its merit. 1

Declaring *Poems* to be a bowdlerized, censored or expurgated text betrays an editorial/critical orientation contrary to the values of a digital humanities community underscored by openness to process and collaboration with others. It permits authorial identity and preferences to trump the slate the values that permitted publication, however second-guessed that edition was. To understand *Poems* to be bowdlerized puts it in the company of *The Family Shakespeare: in which nothing is added to the original text, but those words and expression are omitted which cannot with propriety be read in a family* [Bowdler 2009]. That family-friendly Shakespeare continues to remove the vulgarity and bawdy joys that Thomas’s sister Henrietta sensed more than two centuries ago; the entire six volume set published by Cambridge University Press can be acquired for about $350. Encamping *Poems* with *The Bowdler Shakespeare,* while distantly viable, is to dismiss its achievement as the end result of another morally squeamish, superficially selective editor whose first purpose is to serve the family rather than the author. It is also to place *Poems* in a timeless void, removed from the very social dynamics upon which production and dissemination take place in the digital humanities. 2

More viable is to describe *Poems* as an expurgated Whitman. Rossetti can be accurately but narrowly understood as expurgating *Leaves* in his selection criterion “to omit entirely every poem which could with any tolerable fairness be deemed offensive to the feelings of morals or propriety in this peculiarly nervous age” [Whitman 1868, 20]. However, Henrietta’s editing of Shakespeare made no allowance for the limitations of an age; her Shakespeare was in fact elevated as that fit for all time. By contrast, Rossetti’s edition was qualified and even necessitated by his particularly Victorian *nervous age*. Just as importantly, one purpose of Rossetti’s edition was to serve a living author rather than the sanctity of the family. He upheld American endorsers Burroughs (1867/1971) and O’Connor (1866/2021), who each declared Whitman to be “*the* poet of the epoch” [Whitman 1868, 4]. In judging Whitman as particularly suited for the present age of his edition, Rossetti declared that Victorian readers would benefit by judging for themselves the merits of Whitman, who “beyond all his competitors” is “incapable of all compromise and an initiator in the scheme and form of his works” [Whitman 1868, 4]. 3

Less viable, by far, is to judge *Poems* as a censored text. First, Rossetti served no official office in presenting his selected Whitman. He merely offered his edition to the court of literary deliberation. Second, I doubt any censor has so thoroughly considered and documented a case for censorship. Rossetti offered his edition at invitation of a commercial publisher. Further, he did so after first encountering Whitman’s work as a reader and a leading commentator of Victorian publishing 12 years before his *Chronicle* article. That secretary to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood may have even identified in Whitman the American complement of the movement. Yet further, his goal was to advance reception of an author rather than thwart it. 4

Rather than argue Rossetti was either an advocate for or an expurgator of Whitman, I offer a conciliatory, more utilitarian position. Rossetti brought forward a *selected* Whitman that he thought possible to publish within the constraints of his time. Moreover, he did so for the benefit of a living author and a readership whose understanding of the man was all too frequently shaped by the hearsay-report of the periodicals of the day. While his depiction of a democratic spokesman championing the humanity of all is only one aspect of Whitman, he also presented a Whitman who yearned to receive the love that he offered to others and yet could only indirectly state. Accordingly, I argue that Rossetti presented a Whitman who was both an all-too-humanly needy American citizen and an egalitarian spokesman for the inherent worth of all — regardless of nationality, vocation or any caste formation. This Whitman should be the herald for the digital humanities on his dual insistence on hearing others — all others — well, and being heard. 5

This is a Whitman that should leap off the page of any particular edition into the life of a poem inside and outside of an edition. This is a Whitman that can be summoned from the free access universe of individual editions and re-animated for present readers.

Rossetti's pragmatism was also noted by Folsom (1991), who observed that Whitman granted *Leaves* was "a commodity in a publishing market" (642). From the 1868 *Poems* through *Selected Poems* [Whitman 1892/2008], Whitman sought that larger audience not yet ready to read the ever-growing *Leaves* editions but who might be prompted to do so after a kinder, gentler introduction. The compromise was not that of Whitman's redactors, but Whitman's in his complicity to allow *Leaves* to be partitioned into slimmer volumes and anthology samples [Folsom 1991]. Any excerpt — no matter how large or tamed into making Whitman one of other conventional poets — called into question Whitman's lifelong insistence that *Leaves* should be read as a whole. Only the entirety of that reading experience with its lauds for "cities, immigrants, commerce, mass culture, industry, physicality, nondiscrimination, democratic affection, equality and anti-Puritanism" [Folsom 1991, 663] could secure for Whitman the place he wished to occupy in American letters. Any less thorough presentation amounted to a "sanitizing process," making Whitman "palatable for a public that he had set out to challenge and remake" [Folsom 1991, 663]. 6

Challenging that *sanitizing* assessment of *Poems,* in particular, motivates my examination of the multi-dimensional, variegated Whitman I sense Rossetti surveyed in *Poems*. Simultaneously, I challenge another dearly held cultural narrative that locates authorship most authentically achieved in the literary vision and products of a single writer. Today, *Whitman* is a brand name in present publishing, translation and commentary more than an author who oversaw nine editions of *Leaves* in his lifetime. Even from the outset, *Whitman* ceased to be an author whose name was merely a placeholder for various literary works. In reception and by his own design, *Whitman* was seen at once as shamelessly self-aggrandizing, noble in promoting democratic virtues, and beastly in celebrating the place of sex in human affairs. The ongoing attention he receives depicts an author who rewards, cautions and edifies readers so variously that the author *Whitman* must make way for various *Whitmans,* who indeed "contain multitudes" [Whitman 1867, 51] and, in fact, are prompted by their many receptions. The multitudinous author of the poem that would become "Song of Myself" is not overtly present in *Poems* because Rossetti excerpted no portion of it. However, a Whitman comprised by and capable of containing multitudes is surveyed by Rossetti in the various narrative voices that collectively illustrate both a complexly declarative and privately evasive author. 7

In support of that position, I annotate the lexical and semantic traces of the "Calamus" sequence. Even while the sequence has been consistently regarded as the most overtly homoerotic material of *Leaves* — and among that glossed as gross and indecent — Rossetti included 11 of 40 of those poems that appeared in the 1867 *Leaves*. I do so by the semantic indexing technology by which many of us daily access the world wide web. Accordingly, I argue that *Poems* is truer to the spirit of the 1867 *Leaves* than was apparent both to Whitman dismissing it as a dismemberment and subsequent readers who primarily see authorship as the stylistic verve at work in a singular literary work, as envisioned by one writer. The alternative sense of authorship that I explore is found in a *Whitman* who strides among the various editions of his work, even while he is assisted by others. This *Whitman* in particular should be considered as a herald of our particularly nervously collaborative and open-access age. Among those are sympathetic readers and editors. That is to suggest that even the career tendencies indexed by *oeuvre* fail to contain an author understood as much by his particular literary projects as by reception from his many sorts of readers proposing and disposing of critical approaches. That Whitman may be empirically tracked in *Poems* not only by the "Calamus," content that Rossetti included, but also by that excluded. This *hypertextual Whitman* Rossetti knew as a sympathetic reader because in his selection and framing of *Leaves* he had to acknowledge its past and present reception, even as he anticipated what may entice future readers in *Poems*. 8

A Cross-Atlantic Reception

Before addressing the present reception of Whitman and "Calamus," in particular, I pause to frame the case for how Whitman the author was initially presented to readers on each side of the Atlantic. I merely sample that reception and so refer Whitman enthusiasts to the exhaustive catalogue of reviews prepared by Barney et al. (2007). In doing so, I argue that neither the acerbic dismissals nor sympathetic receptions were singularly instrumental in shaping the Whitman whose name came to index a person and poetic more than singular literary works. *Whitman* as a cultural product is implicitly acknowledged whenever the man is equated with either his body of work or his critical reception. I do so, moreover, because his early reception continues to shape present commentary in this age in which cultural studies is a new edifice framing authors for the next generation of authors seeking to ally themselves to or reject influence. These present *authors* are not only emerging and canonical writers, but also those who make the cases for authorship and who few may even be regarded or come to be regarded as authors in their own rites. 9

Rossetti's advocacy for Whitman enfolded the poet's career. That story begins with Rossetti reading the 1855 *Leaves,* recommended to him by William Bell Scott, the Pre-Raphaelite painter and poet who introduced the brother of Christina and Dante to the 1855 first edition. Then, as he argued in a republished letter to Scott prefacing his introduction to *Poems*, Rossetti "perceived its substantiality and power were still ahead of any eulogium with which it might have been commended to me" [Rossetti 1868, vii]. As the Pre-Raphaelite chronicler perhaps eager to recognize an international cadre devoted to depicting people at their quotidian best and worst, Rossetti favorably reviewed Whitman's poetry in the (London) *Chronicle* in 1867. One outcome of that review was an invitation by John Camden Hotten to edit a selected poems "offering the first tolerably fair chance Whitman has had of making his way with English readers on his own showing" [Whitman 1868, 1]. That edition was presented as a counter to the "mostly short-sighted, sneering, and depreciatory" reception Whitman had so far received. 10

In his 1867 *Chronicle* review of Whitman's work, Rossetti declared the American was an exemplary man of his time, even while he granted that Whitman "alludes to gross things, and in gross words — the clearest, bluntest, and nearly the least civilly repeatable which can come uppermost to the lips" [Peattie 1986, xix]. For him Whitman's "entire originality" demanded some allowance among readers if their hesitations over his coarse language "would exclude him from court" [Peattie 1986, xix] run by censors. He found *Leaves* "intensely modern and intensely American," even while he declared the book to be "*the* largest poetic work of our period" [Peattie 1986, 353]. He defended his selected *Leaves* "because it was clearly impossible that the book, with its audacities of topics and of expression included, should run the same chance of justice, and of circulation through refined minds and hands, which may possibly be accorded to it after the rejection of all such peccant poems" [Peattie 1986, 22]. Regardless of 11

Whitman's reservations of *Poems*, Peattie declared in his introduction to Rossetti's *Selected Letters* that *Poems* helped secure Whitman's place in literature outside of the United States.

12 In a letter to Moncure Conway, an American pastor working at South Place Chapel in London while Rossetti was preparing *Poems,* Rossetti relates he is pleased to work on a British edition of Whitman's poetry [Peattie 1986, 176]. In one letter to fellow Whitman critic James McNeill Whistler, Rossetti maintains "a debtor and creditor account" in his critical commentary. That sober balance between "expounding beauties" and "detailing faults" is particularly important "in the case of so aboriginal and transcendent a genius as Whitman" [Peattie 1986, 191]. In responding to Whitman's complaint of receiving "ungrateful treatment" for his work in the United States, Rossetti returns the encouragement lacking among Whitman's countrymen: "I suppose it is a very general if not universal experience that anything that is at once great and extremely novel encounters for some considerable time much more hostility than acceptance" [Peattie 1986, 191]. In that letter he offers further consolation to Whitman by observing that the hostile reception the poet reports is "rather indeed a testimonial … [to] the great intrinsic value of your writings" [Peattie 1986, 191].

13 Whitman's animus toward his American contemporaries may be understood to be the result of his radical eschewal of traditional rhyme and meter, and the radically dissident voice of self-creation he named "Walt," rather than Walter, in the long untitled poem that became "Song of Myself." Readers' conflation of persona and poet is a constant in the 150 years of commentary and scholarship reviewed in the *Cambridge Companion to Whitman* [Killingsworth 2007].

14 One early anonymous reviewer of the *Brooklyn Daily Times* well represents that trend in an opening assertion: Judgment "on real poems" requires "an account of the poet himself" [Anonymous 1855, 793]. The fecund, coarse language of the opening poem in which Whitman names himself as "Walt Whitman, an American, one of the roughs, a kosmos" prompted the reviewer to declare, "Politeness this man has none, and regulation he has none" [Anonymous 1855, 793]. The depiction of a "rude child of the people! — No imitation — Nor foreigner — but a growth and idiom of America" parodies Whitman's introduction to the first edition written in an equally unorthodox, but ecstatic manner. The reviewer derided both the style and the man in judging the literary effects as those of a "fine brute" who self-satisfyingly refuses "the artificial teaching of a fine writer or speaker" [Anonymous 1855, 793]. While other poets celebrate the actors and sites of history, the poet of *Leaves* "celebrates natural propensities in himself; and that is the way he celebrates all" [Anonymous 1855, 794]. The end result of that "what I assume you shall assume" poetic [Whitman 1867, 13] is "what the serpent left the woman and the man, the taste of the Paradisiac tree of the knowledge of good and evil, never to be erased again" [Anonymous 1855, 794]. Equally offensive to the reviewer is the class betrayal of a poet who fails to acknowledge other poets, even while he "likes the ungenteel ways of the laborers — is not prejudiced one mite against the Irish — talks readily with them — talks readily to niggers — does not make a stand on being a gentleman, nor on learning or manners" [Anonymous 1855, 793].

15 Soon afterward, Edward Everett Hale reviewed the 1855 *Leaves* in *North American Review,* similarly conflating persona and poet. However, Hale credited the unnamed author as bringing to the reader "the freshness, simplicity and reality of what he reads, just as the tired man, lying on the hillside in summer, enjoys the leaves of grass around him" [Anonymous 1855, 795]. Hale's greatest praise for *Leaves*, however, comes in his commentary on Whitman's broken prose preface celebrating the unique possibilities of producing a national literature equal to the promise of the nation. Hale praised Whitman's assertion of native genius found most urgently among the common people. Thus, Whitman's public literary persona was accorded the egalitarianism to which Rossetti was drawn and especially represented in his handling of the "Calamus" poems.

16 The commentary most out of the step with Whitman's contemporary reception came from a woman remarkably out of step in her own rite. That came from Fanny Fern, a.k.a. Sara Payson Willis, the highest paid columnist in the mid-19th century, and one of Whitman's inner circle of New York writers and artists. She declared Leaves to be "unspeakably delicious, after the forced, stiff, Parnassian exotics" of the reigning literati. She found the world was in want of Whitman on two counts. First, she found him an advocate for *women* not *ladies.* Second, the world was in want of *men* not *gentlemen.* The man she found in *Leaves* "dared speak out his strong, honest thoughts, in the face of pusillanimous, toadying, republic aristocracy" [Fern 2002, 798]. While the persona and poet remain conflated, Fern grants that Whitman spoke to and for others.

17 Rossetti also advocated for Whitman in introducing the American poet to his circle of intimates. The most sustaining of those for Whitman was Anne Gilchrist, who was introduced to Whitman's poetry by Rossetti as he was compiling *Poems.* Gilchrist, widowed at age 33 and mother to four children, went on to complete Alexander Gilchrist's biography of Blake with the encouragement of the Rossetti brothers. She first read Whitman at age 41 when serving as a single parent to her children and completing her husband's great life work. At that difficult time, Rossetti gave her his copy of the 1867 *Leaves.* In response to the transport she experienced as a reader, she wrote a series of letters to Rossetti wondering how "words could cease to become words, and become electric streams like these" [Gilchrist 2002, 802]. At Rossetti's encouragement, Gilchrist turned those letters into the one of the earliest substantive critical commentaries on *Leaves*. Among the poems prompting her to lay aside *Leaves* at times in response to all that it demanded of her was the "Calamus," sequence. What became known as "An Englishwoman's Estimate of Walt Whitman" was first anonymously published in *The Radical* (Boston). One commentator annotated Gilchrist's reading of *Leaves* as "an intellectual revolution, a spiritual illumination, a physical arousal, a personal passion" toward accounting for how a book reporting itself to be a man "allow[ed] her to realize, after a lengthy dormant period, tendencies that had been long in developing" [Mardsen 2006, 96]. Only a year later did she reveal herself to and declare her love for Whitman in the first installment of a life-long correspondence.

18 At the end of the century, well after the deaths of both Whitman and Gilchrist, Rossetti in a letter to Anne's daughter, Grace, laments the vapid praise given to Whitman, whom he believed was due "the reasonable, solid, and lofty homage to which his writings are entitled" [Peattie 1986, 184 note 1]. Before Whitman's death, Rossetti believed Whitman's life as an artist and patriot should also be acknowledged. Accordingly, Rossetti wrote then President Grover Cleveland in particular and more generally the American public to succor the impoverished poet in his remaining years [Peattie 1986].

19 While Peattie well annotated the background to the professional relationship between Whitman and Rossetti entirely conducted by correspondence, Erkkila (1989) and Ramsey (1997) are among the few commentators who acknowledged how Whitman benefitted as a poet. In particular, both

scholars recognized how Rossetti's grouping of Whitman's civil war poems under the heading "Drum-Taps" was instrumental to the later 1871 *Leaves.* Erkkila found the final "Drum-Taps" cluster of the 1881 *Leaves* appealing to Providence as it moves from patriotic exultation over the mustering of troops to the suffering and loss of the war. Ramsey extended those insights to argue that Whitman "borrowed this suggestive 'providential' sequence for the 'Drum-Taps'" (166) sequence as it was realized in 1871 *Leaves.* She observed that "the underlying structure … remains Rossetti's, who provided … the thematic 'cycle of war' pattern by which Whitman is taken to have interpreted the American civil upheaval" (166).

20 To Whitman's collaboration with Rossetti, and through him to Tennyson, Symonds, Swinburne and Carpenter, "the paradigmatic" poet "was more widely celebrated in Britain than in his own country" [Collins 2017, 65] at the time of his death in 1892. Drawing the admiration of English composer Vaughn Williams, as well, was "Whitman's political egalitarianism — expressed through notions of 'manly love' and comradeship" [Collins 2017, 65]. That manly-love fellowship, Collins observed "presented a powerful alterative to prevailing Victorian forms of political and social relations" (65). For that depiction of Whitman's egalitarianism Rossetti should receive some credit.

21 Simultaneously, Rossetti could be understood as one of Whitman's (albeit sympathetic) redactors. In his presentation of a Whitman heralding an international brotherhood of comrades and celebrating the general revelation of nature, he altered *Leaves'* clusters, at once reassigning and renaming poems in complement to his sense of thematic unity. See Table 1 for an overview. Rossetti is censorious in removing the material that would prompt righteous indignation, rather than a considered response, from readers. Rossetti's dual role of redactor of and advocate for Whitman introduces the complex terrain of subversion.

22 In introducing a collection of essays annotating Victorian publishing, Womack and Decker (2016) observed "the entangled relationships among writer, text, and reader" (xi) that accompanies any act of subversion. For Rossetti that demanded acknowledging a "peculiarly nervous age" in which readers were expected to principally object to any overt expression of sexual agency. Simultaneously, however, he had to present that aspect of Whitman's work that the dominant culture of his day rejected. More distantly, in allying himself

1867 *Leaves*	1867 label	*Poems* title	Rossetti group	laud
Whoever You are Now Holding My Hand	Whoever	Fit Audience	Songs of Parting	0
These I Singing in Spring	Sing	Singing in Spring	Songs of Parting	1
A Song	ASong	Love of Comrades	Songs of Parting	1
Not Heaving from my Ribb'd Breast Only	Heaving	Pulse of My Life	Songs of Parting	0
Of the Terrible Doubt of Appearances	Terrible	Appearances	Walt Whitman	0
Recorders Ages Hence	Record	The Friend	Walt Whitman	1
Of Him I Love Day and Night	DayNight	A Dream	Walt Whitman	0
To a Stranger	Stranger	To a Stranger	Walt Whitman	1
This Moment Yearning and Thoughtful	Yearn	Other Lands	Walt Whitman	1
When I Peruse the Conquer'd Fame	Peruse	Envy	Walt Whitman	0
What Think You I Take Pen in Hand	Pen	Parting Friends	Walt Whitman	1
I Dreamed in a Dream	Dreamed	The City of Friends	Walt Whitman	1
Among the Multitude	Multi	Among the Multitude	Walt Whitman	0
Full of Life, Now	Full	Centuries Hence	Songs of Parting	1
As I Ebb’d with the Ocean of Life	Ebb’d	Elemental Drifts	Walt Whitman	
Starting from Paumanok	SP	Starting from Paumanok	Chants Democratic	
In Paths Untrodden	Paths			1
Scented Herbage of my Breast	Scented			1
Are You the New Person Drawn to Me	NewPerson			0
Roots and Leaves Themselves Alone	RootsLeaves			1
Not Heat Flames Up and Consumes	NotHeat			1
Trickle Drops	Trickle			0
City of Orgies	Orgies			1
Behold This Swarthy Face	Behold			1
I Saw in Louisiana a Live-Oak Growing	Louisiana			1
I Hear It Was Charged Against Me	Charged			1
The Prairie Grass Dividing	Prairie			1
We Two Boys Together Clinging	Clinging			1
A Glimpse	Glimpse			1
A Promise to California	Promise			1
Here, Sailor!	Sailor			1
Here the Frailest Leaves of Me	Frailest			0
No Labor-Saving Machine	Machine			1
To the East and to the West	EastWest			1
Earth! My Likeness!	Earth			0
A Leaf for Hand in Hand	Leaf			1
Fast Anchor'd, Eternal, O Love	Eternal			1
Sometimes with One I Love	Sometimes			0
That Shadow, My Likeness	Shadow			1
To a Western Boy	Western			0
Of You Whom I Often and Silently Come	Silently			1

Table 1. “Calamus,” Included and Excluded from ‘Poems,’ and Assessed as Laudatory or Cautionary[1]

to Whitman, he had to account for a literary movement that emerged in response to its time rather than was engineered by a coterie of young artists dissatisfied with the Royal Academy. 23

Rossetti’s solution, I argue, was to present the new man of a new democratic nation, whose love-longings for comrades could be spiritualized as canonically as did Dante in *La Vita Nuova*, Edmund Spenser in *Amoretti*, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning in *Songs of the Portuguese.* Framing Whitman as a transcendental wooer of soldiers, stevedores, farmers, and tradesmen was also resonant with the Pre-Raphaelite standard of naturalism. Those *roughs* were for Whitman in his broken prose manifesto “the genius of the United States [in] Their manners speech dress friendship — the freshness and candor of the physiognomy — the picturesque looseness of their carriage” [Whitman 1868, iv] . Perhaps in Whitman’s egalitarian trope of “the President’s taking off his hat to them not they to him” (iv) Rossetti early on found another Pre-Raphaelite brother. The depiction of Whitman as the outsider artist “unfettered by existing conventions” [Prettejohn 2012, 5] complemented the self-creation of an author who learned 24

carpentry from his father and was trained in a trade at the printing press. More certainly, by 1868, Rossetti surveyed Whitman's attempt to define the new man in a new nation by eschewing rhyme and even blank verse to the point that some poems may be regarded as "a warp of prose amid the weft of poetry" (3).

25 More urgently, however, Rossetti celebrated Whitman's open, extending and inviting humanity. The poet's subject, he noted in his introduction to *Poems,* is "every subject" [Whitman 1868, 5]. He summarized Whitman's verve as realizing "One's self" amid the "En Masse" of humanity. For Rossetti, *Leaves* "is the poem both of Personality and of Democracy … in it the most literal view of things is continually merging into the most rhapsodic or passionately abstract" (5). Whitman's British advocate and Pre-Raphaelite chronicler, thus, illustrates the entanglement of relations that Womack and Decker observed in reading and positively responding to the subversive presence of a new art form.

26 Consider the double-edged subversion evident in the Swedenborg epigraph leading off *Poems*. That emendation was entirely Rossetti's, who employed it to spiritualize Whitman's emphasis on the body as another sacred site of creation. Rossetti excerpted the reflections of the 17th century Christian mystic on the bodily presence of angels to suggest that both Whitman and his panoply of American citizens may be regarded as emanations of heaven, despite the "gross ignorance" Swedenborg observed "respecting Angels and Spirits as to suppose them to be minds without a form, or mere thoughts" [Whitman 1868, vii]. Through Swedenborg, Rossetti at once elevates the peripheral citizenry of the United States, exhorts readers for failing to entertain angels well, and sanctifies Whitman's work as that proceeding from an other-worldly messenger finding his subject matter in the very stuff of the world. That gesture could be understood as an enabling subversion because it honors Whitman's project of recognizing the inherent value of the entire citizenry, even those who are rarely seen and still more rarely lauded. Yet, that spiritualization of people in their material conditions simultaneously reifies understanding some as radically Other than the captains of commerce, statesmen and exceptional artists. In even acknowledging that polarism of spiritual and material conditions to which Swedenborg objected and by which readers were likely to dismiss Whitman, Rossetti may be understood to accede to the values and thinking of a dominant culture well practiced in bigotry. In Rossetti's gesture of elevating *manly love* as a trope for egalitarianism, his subversion may be understood to be co-opted and absorbed within the dominant culture's practices of finding and treating some more worthily than others. That is to observe that if the roughs, criminals and men attracted to other men should be entertained as possible angels, as Rossetti suggests in the epigraph he appended to his selected Whitman, then the editor has only further muddied their better reception as members of a common humanity. Likewise, if Whitman's celebration of manly love is spiritualized to emphasize a new and better humanity emerging, then that better world remains shackled in caste and entitlement by even acknowledging a material-spiritual split.

Present reception of the 'Calamus' sequence in the United States

27 Rossetti's tenuous walk among his cultural terrain of reception has been undertaken more recently by "Calamus" commentators who depict Whitman as a democratic, yet quite vulnerable speaker. Simultaneously, the sequence commands critical attention in indexing frailty and desire independently of sexual orientation [Sherman 1992]. Cocks found it astutely illustrating the Victorian evasion of sexual desire by "spiritual communion" [Cocks 2001, 192].

28 Thomas found Whitman adopting a different rhetorical strategy than "Song of Myself" in a speaker foregoing contradiction to state the complexities of love in order to more ambivalently and fully accept the polar pairing of life and death (2010). The "Calamus" sequence Thomas observed dramatizes love "as predicated upon loss and vice versa" (643) toward identifying "the complexities of human experience" (644). That more general human experience in love is a check to "presidential incompetency and growing sectional tensions" [Reynolds 2010, 629]. In the 1860 *Leaves* in which "Calamus" premiered, Reynolds observed a campaign to appeal to a middle-class readership and show Whitman neatly trimmed and conventional, rather than the "rough" persona of the first edition. Figure 1 illustrates that contrast in personae, as well as showing the more grandfatherly Whitman with whom Rossetti began a dialogue to launch the first British edition of a radically redacted and regrouped *Leaves.*

29 That rebranded, more fashionable Whitman of 1860, enticed clerks and gaffers to become Whitmaniacs [Cocks 2001]. Wheat identified *Leaves* as therapeutic literature meant to form the free reader into a free person and "therefore an appropriate citizen for a fully democratic party" [Wheat 1990, 236], while "Calamus" complements that spokesmanship quality of the sequence in its insistence on speaking to the political and philosophical appeals of democracy. How we adhere to one another, regardless of regional differences, is a primary driver of the content, which Wheat interpreted as a spiritual counterpoint to the far more carnal "Children of Adam" sequence. Sexual desire should be understood as another cultural production that exists in negotiation within a complex set of rules larger than our tendency to dichotomize sex into a private experience distinct from public consequence [Grossman 1990]. Accordingly, in the evangel-poem "Starting from Paumanok," Grossman found Whitman only implicitly figuring as the apologist for manly love, while explicitly he does so for the common mother of liberty, Ma Femme.

30 Common to all of these perspectives is the function of indirection in expressing difficult and even repressed content. In recognition of that skillful avoidance of explicit content that would raise the ire of a censor, gay writers emphasize the otherness they sense in their sexual desire and identity [Bergman 1991]. Their otherness is particularly pronounced in a "categorical, perhaps even ontological" sense of difference from their heterosexual counterparts [Peterson 1998, 242]. The result is indirection, until that time when same-sex desire may be as simply and directly stated as does Whitman in "A Leaf for Hand in Hand". Then we will "see it common for you to walk hand in hand" [Whitman 1867, 143].

31 The sequence's relation to the earlier manuscript grouping of "Live Oak, with Moss" brings attention both to the subversive act of declaring same-sex love and self-censorship. Scholnick reviewed charges that Whitman self-censored in distributing the contents of the 12-poem "Live Oak, with Moss" throughout the larger "Calamus" sequence. Doing so effectively "blunted their meaning" [Schnolnick 2004, 110], two commentators held. Allen anticipated this dispute by noting that Whitman's notebook manuscript of the "Live Oak" sequence more coherently told the love story of one man for another than was evident in "Calamus," [Allen 1955]. While Scholnick agreed that the narrative unity of "Live Oak, with Moss" was compromised in "Calamus," he argued that the sequence "extends and deepens its themes in quite surprising ways" (110). Countering a charge of Whitman self-

censoring [Helms 1992], Parker assessed “Live Oak, with Moss” as a “gay manifesto” [Parker 1984, 149] when he selected it for inclusion in the fourth edition of *The Norton Anthology of American Literature.* The sequence Parker commented upon was that which Bowers found in 1958 in the Valentine Collection of Whitman’s manuscripts, while the one that Helms read was restored to its original manuscript order but gathered from the 45-poem “Calamus” of the 1860 *Leaves*. Scholnick observed that both critics “make textual judgments on the basis of their assumption that Whitman faced such widespread homophobia that he was forced to engage in self-censorship” [Schnolnick 2004, 127]. The silencing homophobia each argued must have influenced the dissolution of “Live Oak, with Moss” into “Calamus” was not present in American letters until much later in the 19th century, Scholnick argued.

32 A further commonality is this: Both Helms and Parker privilege particular texts in noting authorship. Neither regarded process as an integral process in publication and a fostering component in authorship. By contrast, I argue that the typeset-altered printer’s copy for the 1860 *Leaves* that Whitman prepared co-existed in his mind with the manuscript version of “Live Oak, with Moss.” That is a nod toward a new era of critical commentary enabled by computer-aided assessment of texts that may be understood to co-exist, regardless of manuscript dates and year of publication.

33 In that simultaneity of texts in dialogue with one another, an inter-edition Whitman emerges who ever reminds readers that *Leaves* is accretive as the Mississippi delta in receiving the stuff of a continent. If left unchecked, the river would shift its banks. Within the unchecked and celebrated accretion of *Leaves,* one current is “Calamus” as another is the “Children of Adam” cluster. Both find common expression in the human need to *adhere* to one another, regardless of expression in sexual attraction.

34 In “Starting from Paumanak” (SP), the poem that serves as a Genesis function for Whitman and that which Rossetti selected to introduce *Poems,* Whitman illustrates the primacy of the sexual drive in listening to a mockingbird “inflating his throat, and joyfully singing” (78). The moment underscores not only lyric beauty and a poet finding his counterpart in the natural world, but also that drive to find the best expression of ourselves — as citizens and sojourners — in “the subtle, clandestine, away beyond” (78). Immediately following Whitman allegorizes democracy as Ma Femme and pledges to “make the songs of passion, to give them their way” (79). Among that humanity Whitman declares he will represent are “outlawed offenders” whose songs Whitman will transform into “the true poem of riches — To earn for the body and the mind whatever adheres, and goes forward, and is not dropped by death” (79).

35 In this manifesto celebrating life itself and the lives of all citizens, even those outlawed offenders, Whitman naturalizes his commitment to egalitarianism and his stance in indirection. Whitman realizes the mockingbird sang not only for himself, his mate attending to her brood, and for others listening. That song was also “a charge transmitted, and gift occult, for those being born” (78) delivered in a poem surveying the circumstances and settings of a poet’s birth. That birth song I sense resounding in *Poems* as much for the citizenry of a new nation as for men loving one another in nonchalance in the regrouped and disguised “Calamus” poems.

36 Accordingly, I neither seek to arbitrate which Whitman is at work in the “Calamus” sequence nor what that sequence held for its own time. Neither do I wish to assess the aesthetic or ethical merit of one edition over another. More urgent is simply following its rhetoric of indirection through two distinct groups of “Calamus” poems toward showing a method of establishing influence in a literary text. However rebranded, compromised and appropriated is that content, I sense the “Calamus” content of *Poems* substantively recalls the entire sequence presented in the 1867 *Leaves.* Those poems also underscore both the loudly declarative Democratic spokesman and the more personally evasive, vulnerable speaker Rossetti recognized in *Leaves*.

37 The extra-human processing that enables texts to co-exist may be understood as *hypertextual*. This term from information science is now commonplace. Presently, hypertext is not merely a device by which additional information may be *clicked* and so accessed in a moment. It also suggests a state of mind that returns readers to the cacophony of literary texts speaking to and against one another *before* being orchestrated by the activity of critical response.

Inside a Semantic Indexing Machine

38 *Hypertext* was first introduced as a device through which, for example, the work of “handling personal file systems” may be better effected during the drafting of a technical paper [Nelson 1965, 84]. At that early meeting of the Association for Computing Machinery, Nelson observed that those files “shade into manuscripts” while “the assembly of textual notes *becomes* the writing of text without a sharp break” (84). Those personal files exist in non-linear relation to what becomes the linearized account of a paper read from start to finish. However, he noted a cost to that linear ordering. The alternative or unrealized connections among the strands of those information swirls are lost. Hypertext, by contrast, allows for “a body of written or pictorial material” to be “interconnected in such a complex way that it could not conveniently be presented or represented on paper” (96).

39 That hypertextual mind, I argue, is fundamental to those who write poetic sequences. Nelson may be understood to well account for that simultaneity of poems speaking to one another in complement, contrast and qualification in the title of his paper, “A File Structure for the Complex, The Changing and the Intermediate.” That provisional world variously ordered in either a literary work or a technical paper becomes yet more revealing when all possible content is proximately represented in a relevance score.

40 Hypertext as an idea rather than a technique in information relay implicitly acknowledges the modern topical indexing accomplished within a search engine. Search terms survey a collective sensibility. Search engines simultaneously offer assessment of the fit of our terms to particular internet resources. As the ideas of a literary work are executed in but one of many possible linear presentations, search terms similarly reveal the possible but not exhaustive components of any given inquiry. While the results of a search may be judged to be either spurious or helpful, we soon learn how to better locate that information, audio or video that prompted an inquiry. Our trial and error employment of the terms that may take us to internet topics may be understood as the theoretical framing we bring to understanding a literary work. If our search terms represent the theoretical framing we bring to any reading experience, then the relevance scores of our internet queries represent assessment of fit for a critical perspective.

41 I offer the analogies of internet searches and relevance scores to literary study to illustrate a different approach to interpretation enabled by the digital

humanities. Regardless of the critical framing we bring either knowingly or naively to reading literature, we can assess the rightness of its application against the givenness of the word to word associational terrain fundamental to a literary work. In that capacity alone we may be saved from imposing a critical framing on a literary work. In complement to any exegetical program of interpretation is the empirical presence of words proximately represented. Open-source programming techniques in natural language processing, then, offer a boon to the reader who first wishes to proceed from the radical givenness of a text's composition.

42 I pause over these now familiar wonders of search engine inquiry to illustrate the basic mechanics of latent semantic analysis (LSA). It developed as an information retrieval tool to index the relation of one term to another within a static dataset, like a literary corpus [Deerwester et al. 1990]. It has become a theory of knowledge acquisition for the human capacity to infer meaning by the context of usage [Landauer and Dumais 1997]. In demonstrating that an LSA application could correctly supply the right answer to a multiple choice synonym test at a better-than-guessing rate, Landauer and Dumais offered two interpretations. The more conservative explanation is that the "contextual statistics of usage alone" (211) sufficiently enable a machine to make the appropriate choice. The more radical interpretation is that this inductive model of learning reveals "an important underlying mechanism of human cognition in general" (212). I follow that stronger argument in exploring the machine-aided complement to demonstrating the relation of one poem to another.

43 The *web* of the present study is comprised mainly by the word to word relations of *Poems*, as well as the largely absent "Calamus" sequence as Whitman realized it in the 1867 *Leaves.* That inter-edition resonance of influence may be understood as *hypertextual* to suggest a state of mind that returns readers to literary texts speaking to and against one another. It is anterior to critical response. Accordingly, I use LSA to index the radical givenness of terms within Whitman's poetry.

44 LSA works by surveying the frequency of terms whittled down from words by root-stemming in order to approximate their cross-document senses in a static corpus. It is a *bag-of-words* method because neither syntax nor part-of-speech is integral to the representation of content. Fundamental is the frequency of terms in the corpus as a whole, not only within individual documents. That corpus is assumed to model "a system of simultaneous equations that can determine the similarity of meaning of words and documents to each other" [Kulkarni et al. 2014, 71], thus approximating shop talk or discourse.

45 LSA is only one approach in distributional semantics. However, whether the architecture employed represents a corpus by its term-to-term relatedness or from a window of its terms as does Hyperspace Analogue to Language (HAL) [Lund and Burgess 1996], word count is formative. Context is indirectly established by a matrix formed by a survey of the words retained for analysis as those appear in a document by document indexing. Both HAL and LSA are *count* models [Mandera et al. 2017], or bag-of-word approaches in modeling meaning through a set of term to term co-occurrences. This approximation of sense-making Landauer and Dumais (1997) equated with the verbal conditioning that prompts learning by means of inference. One limitation of count models is that all information must be present before meaning can be represented in a series of statistical transformations that represent a corpus by only its most resonant terms. Syntax, however, never entirely weights a *count* representation.

46 Count and predict approaches each benefit the digital humanities. Selecting the appropriate representational method should hinge upon the purpose for bringing a set of texts together. If that collection of literary texts is assembled because novelty of trope is expected, then the count method of LSA makes sense, for the corpus itself argues against the value of predicting the likelihood of a term followed by another. By contrast, if the corpus were comprised, for example, to understand the nature of stylistic continuity between passages, then a predict model is the appropriate choice.

47 The count model approach is right for the present study because novelty of trope is instrumental in a poetic sequence. It is also appropriate toward understanding the sensibility of an author rather than its expression in particular works. The poems Rossetti excerpted from "Calamus" are identical to their *Leaves* presentation; regrouping and redacting the number of them were Rossetti's most important editorial tasks. The central matter of the present study is tracking the possible resonance in sense between excluded and included "Calamus" content.

48 This study hinges upon the ideational, non-linear presence of words summoned to speak for the content of a literature meant for a new republic. Its emphasis is the numinous presence of words like *love, state* and *manly* rather than development within a field of expertise or the continuity of one draft of a novel with a later draft. Accordingly, I selected LSA to model the influence I sense in the entirety of "Calamus" being resonant within *Poems* and the excluded content found in *Leaves.*

49 LSA emulates an inductive method of learning by two principles in cognitive psychology: 1) we understand a topic by a set of words, and 2) those associations are enriched, refined and schematized by further and even widely variant exposure to that topic. LSA, then, is both a method for statistically emulating induction and a theory of human learning [Landauer et al. 2007]. It represents semantic sense in three steps. The first is by indexing the co-occurrence of terms within and between documents of a corpus. The second step of LSA employs a widely used factor reduction process known as singular value decomposition (SVD). This step multiplies a matrix of term values by those of the documents to produce ranked cross-products, or singular values. The greater the singular values of those cross-products, the more information each provides for the representation of a corpus. More concretely, those singular values in the present study represent the sensibility most central to Rossetti's edition even as those poems are simultaneously influenced by the excluded "Calamus" content of *Leaves.*

50 The final LSA step truncates the full representation of a set of documents to one that preserves its complexity but also eliminates noise. Each poem or section contributes to semantic space by its unique term to term relationality. Truncating dimensions, then, does not eliminate the full array of terms used to summon sense, for documents rather than terms are ranked by their singular values. This dimension reduction step eliminates not terms assigned to the row of a matrix, but the column-defined documents that address corpus wide tendencies. Because those columns are rank-ordered or orthogonal, the singular value as the cross-product of both documents and terms offers a way for less to say more. This dimension reduction step is precise enough that the original matrix can be recomposed. Truncation, then, may be understood as the decision at what decimal place to the right of the zero may be rounded up.

In the following research questions, I follow the distributed semantics of one poem considered in its similarity to another. I do so without hyperlinks per se, for that would require some personal set of files to have been constructed in advance of inquiry. However, I follow a hyperlinked sensibility in allowing the poems to speak to their relatedness in a common metric that can be readily employed within the digital humanities. Moreover, I do so without imposing any program to their relatedness. Rather, while entertaining a rhetoric of indirection, I simultaneously test a theory that “Calamus” is comprised by both lauds and cautions for those who would love by standards not yet publish’d (“Paths” 6). Accordingly, I asked: 51

1. What is the within-group relatedness of “Calamus” poems included in *Poems?*
2. How related are “Calamus” poems across editions?
3. What is the relation of the “Calamus” content Rossetti sampled to “Elemental Drifts” in Rossetti’s “Walt Whitman” group?
4. Does the excluded content show resonance with the evangel-poem “Starting from Paumanok”?

A hypertextual program of reading the “Calamus” sequence

I account for the importance of Rossetti’s *Poems* more truly representing the Whitman’s legacy than either Whitman or modern scholars grant by a hypertextual frame. That allows the 1867 Leaves to co-exist with Poems, even as “Live Oak, with Moss” may be understood to co-exist with “Calamus.” In that hypertextual field an author’s texts may speak simultaneously before they are ordered to represent the linear frame of an argument conducted within the bounds of any critical reading approach. Doing so implicitly derides the New Critical claim that a text is sufficient onto itself. I argue otherwise, especially in the case of *Poems*’ troubling relation to the 1867 *Leaves*. Accordingly, I argue *Poems* reveals a greater sense of authorship than any of Whitman’s singular products of composition, whether those be found in a poem, sequence or book. The present study, then, courts the New Historicist allowance for the formative presence of extra-textual material, especially that of the “Calamus” poems excluded in Poems even while the 1867 “Calamus” has been completely erased by Rossetti’s alternative groupings. In that sense of authorship I necessarily call into question the power dynamics evident in dismissing Poems as the compromised, bowdlerized or sanitized Whitman. 52

To examine that hypertextual Whitman, I employ the open-source statistical platform R, which enables 10,000 distinct statistical operations, data handling and imaging techniques. In complement to two particular software packages, I used a freely available editor (Rstudio 2021) to process the text set, which I captured in poem and section divisions on an Excel spreadsheet. The *lsa* package allowed me to create a corpus comprised by the whole of *Poems* and the excluded “Calamus” content [Wild 2020]. I also employed that package to aggregately score the similarity of one poem’s words against those from another poem. See Tables 2-4. That representation I could further pass on to the *LSAfun* package toward doing the passage to passage scoring featured in Tables 5-8 [Güenther et al. 2015]. That package also enabled me to examine the closest semantic neighbors of a word. 53

I found 111 poems or sections sharing the greatest semantic similarity indexed by stemmed terms comprising the whole of Poems and the excluded “Calamus” content. Those most generally applicable components of a text set retained for analysis are called dimensions. In general, an LSA best performs in a space of 200 to 500 dimensions, although an empirical survey of 49 studies found optimal factors from 6 to 1,000 dimensions [Bradford 2008]. Singular values < .94 were effectively removed from the corpus representation by setting each to 0. This procedure highlights the underlying semantic structure of words. Those words that are most similar are shown to be proximate to one another “even if they never co-occur in a document,” while documents similarly benefit “even if they share no types (or words/terms) in common” [Martin and Berry 2007, 42]. This technique, then, removes the limitations of tracking lexile usage. The advantage of the share function in the present study is that the reduced set references the semantic space of the corpus by the largest poem/section-level tendencies and the entirety of the word-set that comprise it. 54

As reported in Table 1, I labeled each “Calamus” poem either as a laud or a caution for living out comradely love either in same-sex desire or in the service of a new republic. That designation I held to be provisional, for it springs from my own reading of “Calamus” as a poetic sequence granting that those who love will experience both a sense of wondrous revelation and resignation over lovers’ human limitations. I granted, too, at the outset that one poem may have elements of each sensibility motivating it. A *laud* I took to be celebratory of a lover’s progress through the difficult terrain of desire that can only be sensed at the periphery of those standards Whitman in “Paths” declared depart from “the pleasures, profits, conformities” (4) of social sanction. I considered a *caution* to be either a warning to those who would dare to love or an illustration of a hazard in love. However, Whitman troping his poems as “herbage” may make each a laud in celebration of an authentic life, even while those same poems, or “body-leaves growing up above me above death” (“Scented” 3), resound in caution. 55

I test that laudatory-cautionary distinction by the distributed relation of one word to another across both *Poems* and the “Calamus” sequence excluded from it. That distributed sense of one poem’s relation to another I annotate by the cognitive science fundamental to information retrieval [Deerwester et al. 1990], disciplinary trends in language use [Kulkarni et al. 2014], and what mood or mind is operative within a discussion [Muthasima et al. 2019]. I do so first to demonstrate a method of reading that allows to literary texts to speak to one another, even while offering metrics that approximate the degree of similarity that may be found within and between groups of texts. 56

Such proximal indexing of a term within a poem and across others consequently allows us to follow the aggregated relation of all terms within a poem to another. That relation, or resonance, I track in the present study by reporting the *cosine* approximation of relatedness. Most generally, a cosine may be interpreted as a correlation, which in the present study range continuously in strength from 0 to 1. Those correlations are more precisely stated as the “semantic distance between two vectors … given by the cosine of the angle between them” [Kintsch 2014, 559]. Accordingly, I report a degree of topical and thematic resonance between Whitman editions as the averaged cosine similarity of one passage to another [Güenther et al. 2016]. Because cosine may be understood as a correlation, we can expect different statements of concept overlap. I consider the categorical predictor of “Calamus” content to be either included or excluded in Poems to be weak for a cosine of .10, while moderate is > .30 and strong > .50 [Cohen 1992]. 57

All Whitman texts employed in the present study came from the 1867 *Leaves of Grass* and 1868 *Poems by Walt Whitman* archived on the Whitman archive maintained by the Center for Digital Research in the Humanities at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. All pages cited conform to the eBook edition of *Poems* archived by the center. I cited excluded “Calamus” content by the line number of the center’s 1867 *Leaves* edition. 58

The more nuanced decisions came in deciding which texts supply a non-“Calamus” complement to examine *Calamus* phenomenality. I also considered what introductory sequence Rossetti admitted could possibly serve the naming function of what became “Song of Myself,” but what Whitman called in 1867 the “Walt Whitman” sequence. 59

“Calamus” bridges *Poems* and the 1867 *Leaves*. Accordingly, I used it to examine the within-group and between-group relatedness of its poems (Q1 and Q2). I partitioned the poems either by the laud or caution distinction earlier described. I further partitioned the text set by “Calamus” content included or excluded from *Poems.* I selected “Elemental Drifts” for two reasons to explore the resonance of “Calamus” content with an introductory poem Rossetti believed he could publish without having to go to court (Q3). First, it appears in Rossetti’s *Walt Whitman* cluster, where most of the “Calamus” he excerpted is contained. Second, “Elemental Drifts” is widely anthologized and so serves it as its own Whitman introduction to new readers. Finally, to examine the semantic resonance of “Calamus” content with another of Whitman’s origin poems (Q4), I selected “Starting from Paumanok” (SP). Grossman identifies what would become “SP” as “Proto-Leaf,” which introduces the 1860 *Leaves* [Grossman 1990]. Likewise, Rossetti allowed this “evangel-poem” to introduce *Poems.* Its mission to bring “comity by day and by night between all The States” (73) is present in the “Calamus” sequence as well. Grossman observed that “SP” celebrates the Union as “the evangel-poem of comrades” (74). 60

Results

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Whoever	.75	.58	.41	.41	.10	.46	.04	.20
Heaving	.46	.07	.27	.47	.003	.27	.39	.02
Terrible	.54	.16	.52	.27	.32	.30	.05	.03
DayNight	.34	.18	.28	.52	.04	.31	.71	.04
Peruse	.17	.03	.17	.12	.01	.02	.01	.03
Multi	.06	.02	.17	.05	.03	.10	.01	.01

Table 2. Correlations in the Laudatory and Cautionary “Calamus” Content of *Poems*[2]

Q1: What is the within-group relatedness of “Calamus” poems included in Poems?

Precisely because of the novelty of trope expected in a poetic sequence, few poems designated either as a laud or a caution resonate strongly in that distinction. Rather, some poems celebrate manly love while others caution its practice. That is clear in the poem to poem comparisons measured by the averaged correlations of cosine that comprise each poem. More toward illustrating a method in testing the caution-laud distinction in “Calamus” than toward arguing for its utility, I discuss the relationship of the cautionary “Whoever” to poems I take to be lauds for those who love others unconventionally or in service of a new republic. My primary point is this: Reader’s conclusions can be put to the test within that distributive semantics fundamental to either a count or predict approach. Any argument can then be assessed and reconsidered by the evidence of document to document and word to word phenomena. 61

In the cautionary “Whoever,” the speaker warns away a suitor. That intimate must complete an apprenticeship to be in relation with the speaker. Better that the suitor “Put [him] down and depart on [his] way” (12) than “give up all else” (8). In the laudatory “Record” that warning is not issued to a suitor, but to any who would love as does the speaker and understands the dread of an indifferent response from another. In “Stranger” the speaker returns to the direct address, but in possibly warning the stranger away from the fervor he or she may expect. While the speaker in “Whoever” grants the suitor may perhaps be worthy of his attention, the counterpart in “Sing” declares he is the only one worthy to praise the love of comrades. By contrast, a troop gathers around him in “Sing.” To that possibly worthy suitor in “Whoever,” the speaker names himself “the new husband” and “comrade” (26). That identity is most explicit in “Sing” at another pond-side, where “him that tenderly loves me, and returns again never to separate from me” (19) receives a calamus root as token from the speaker. In “ASong” that husband fathers “the most splendid race the sun ever shone upon/ … With the life-long love of comrades” (2-3). Those who remember Whitman as the husband of the few who dare to love as completely as he does and father to the many in “Record” should name him “the tenderest lover” (3). Although unacknowledged in “Stranger,” the speaker might have “surely lived a life of joy” (3) with another. Whitman again fancies himself as the husband who received “parting [as] the parting of dear friends” (5) in “Pen,” where he sees the embrace of two men on a pier. In “Full,” which concludes the “Calamus” sequence, the speaker is husband “to you yet unborn” (4). He can only fulfill that office by his poems. Yet, the “Calamus” speaker also grants a legacy of being misunderstood, as he does in “Whoever.” In “Pen” that speaker cautions that his subject matter is neither the majestic battleship nor “splendors of the past day” (3), but only that scene of two men parting as dear friends. His future readers, he grants in “Sing,” will find only what they need in his poems, while fewer still would receive calamus as their due. That husband-longing professed in “Record” reframes the speaker as one “Who was not proud of his songs, but of the measureless ocean of love within him” (5). 62

The caution-laud distinction, then, does not define a sub-genre for Whitman as much as provide poles by which a non-scripted love will be experienced by the wooer, the beloved and the society framing both. The non-scriptedness of expressing that love either for another man or in service of a more radically inclusive republic is a topic larger than either a cautionary or laudatory rhetoric. Whitman’s sometimes cautious, sometimes joyful negotiation of manly love returns us to the experience of reading a poetic sequence. The difficult, even damning terrain of loving both out of bounds and out of measure is recognized even within the same poem celebrating that adventure. Accordingly, while the way to that greater love in “Whoever” is “suspicious” and “uncertain,” it rewards by revealing the new husband of a new republic. The “Calamus” content Rossetti selected for *Poems* qualifies the laud or caution theme defining each of the selections, for as was shown above, the decidedly cautionary “Whoever” strongly resonates with the exemplary laud found in “Sing.” In Table 3 reported below, I further test that laud-caution distinction in examining the lauds included and 63

excluded from *Poems,* thus beginning to explore inter-edition resonance between *Poems* and *Leaves.* I next do so with poems I take to be cautionary (Table 4). Those annotations I offer in response to Q2. I continue that rippling-outward investigation to examine resonance in two other thematic groups identified by Rossetti toward answering Q3 and Q4. The first cluster, "Walt Whitman," holds most of the "Calamus" content excerpted for *Poems.* The second cluster I examine is Rossetti's "Chants Democratic," which introduces his Whitman edition. I examine the first poem of that cluster, "Starting from Paumanok" ("SP"), in particular.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Sing	.49	.75	.66	.11	.08	.45	.58	.11	.02	.03	.15	.16	.01
Asong	.46	.51	.33	.09	.15	.44	.38	.32	.10	.09	.04	.28	.03
Record	.16	.45	.24	.17	.19	.40	.78	.05	.01	.04	.01	.09	.01
Stranger	.29	.49	.31	.03	.03	.16	.39	.08	.06	.03	.05	.10	.02
Yearn	.15	.08	.24	.09	.01	.02	.12	.01	.01	.10	.09	.20	.01
Pen	.15	.40	.15	.15	.21	.56	.75	.002	.17	.05	.01	.20	.12
Dreamed	.01	.04	.06	.02	.04	.14	.21	.05	.004	.004	.01	.001	.01
Full	.37	.07	.22	.01	.01	.02	.11	.01	.01	.004	.012	.001	.01

Table 3. Correlations of the Laudatory "Calamus" Included and Excluded in *Poems*

	14	15	16	17	18	19
Sing	.11	.04	16	17	18	19
Asong	.27	.01	.10	.14	.08	.36
Record	.08	.01	.01	.08	.03	.08
Stranger	.05	.04	.47	.10	.27	.42
Yearn	.01	.01	.08	.02	.49	.12
Pen	.03	.03	-.01	.02	.49	.04
Dreamed	.004	.01	.02	.01	.01	.35
Full	.004	.01	.02	.01	.01	.02

Table 4. Correlations of the Laudatory "Calamus" Included and Excluded in *Poems* continued.[3]

Q2: How related are "Calamus" poems across editions?

"Sing" and "Scented" (.75) most dramatically resonated in the laudatory "Calamus" content Rossetti included and excluded. Both poems are united in praise for lovers and in the speaker's unique ability to issue that praise. More strongly at the level of trope, these poems advance through catalogues of the natural world tokens the speaker imparts to those whom he finds have joined him in approaching a liminal space defined as much by nature as desire. The leaves and roots of "Scented" are more directly troped as the pages of a book springing from the speaker that will yet be better regarded in the days to come. In "Sing" those leaves take many forms: lilac, pine branches, moss from a live-oak, laurel, maple, chestnut, wild orange and the calamus root, which is "the token of comrades" (19). These other tokens of the natural world the speaker dispenses as each follower needs and as he desires. He only reserves the "Calamus," root "to them that love as I myself am capable of loving" (28). 64

The strongest thematic resonance between the poems is the poet commissioned to represent that love of comrades that will make possible a truly inclusive and fostering democracy. In "Scented" that commission is expected to enable "immortal reverberations through the States" (25) and will one day be seen when comrades can "dissipate this entire show of appearance" (36). That coming enlightenment is more immediately sensed in "Sing" as the troop that gathers around the speaker in his wildwood walkabouts. This troop comes to take on the presence of a cloud of witnesses (*Hebrews* 12:1) because it is comprised by "dear friends dead or alive" (13). These friends surround the speaker, at once commissioning him and in need of the tokens he dispenses. The poems are also joined in their strong resonance with other poems in the "Calamus" sequence. Of the 16 that may be understood to be laudatory, two are strongly resonant ("RootsLeaves" and "Louisiana") in comparison to "Sing," while three others demonstrate moderate resonance between aggregate cosine relations between .25 and .49. "Scented" resonates strongly with one of the laudatory poems Rossetti included in *Poems,* while moderately so with three others. The near-zero correspondences of "Calamus" content occur most generally in the briefest poems (e.g., "Full" and "Prairie"). 65

I considered the moderate resonance of "Full" with "Paths" (.38). This final poem of "Calamus" proposes that the Whitman who was once 40 years old in 1859, then visible in public and as a poet of these States, would be "invisible" when the imagined reader finds his poems a century or more later. That second life for Whitman is in the reader's imagination, "Fancying how happy you were if I could be with you" (8). The complement for the first poem of the sequence comes also in 1859, as the speaker is "Bequeathing hence types of athletic love" (14). In establishing the project of the "Calamus" sequence and in anticipation of the imagined reader finding it one day, the speaker "Proceed[s] for all who are or have been young men,/To tell the secret of my nights and days,/To celebrate the need of comrades" (16-18). That moderate resonance between its place as a laud for a comradely literature that Rossetti included in *Poems,* "Full" bears no greater relation to the excluded, far more overtly amorous content of "Calamus." 66

	NewPerson	Trickle	Frailest	Earth	Sometimes	Western
Whoever	.28	.18	.03	.04	.19	.12
Heaving	.09	.03	.01	.01	.09	.01
Terrible	.03	.05	.01	.08	.01	.06
DayNight	.03	.02	.01	.02	.03	.02
Peruse	.02	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01
Multi	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01	.02

Table 5. Correlations of the Cautionary "Calamus" Content Included and Excluded in *Poems*

In these poems that might all be considered cautionary, there is at best only near moderate resonance. "Whoever" provides exempla of that point in its various ways of figuring caution. Its speaker cautions that he is not what a suitor supposes, for the way to meet him is at best uncertain and even destructive. That suitor would have to become a novitiate in order for the speaker to become your sole and exclusive standard (8), that requiring the suitor to abandon "The whole past theory of [his] life and all conformity to the lives around [him]" (10). Because the courtship would require so much, the speaker warns away the suitor, unless he is willing to seek him "by stealth in some wood for trial" (11). Only in the marginal spaces of "Paths" will the suitor find the speaker as "the new husband" or "comrade" (21). The peril of approaching the Beloved is equal to that of reading his poems. Those poems, moreover, are evasive, "for it is not for what I put into it that I have written this book" (32). 67

Of all the poems that may be considered cautionary in the sequence, "NewPerson" is the most resonant with "Whoever" (.28). That relation is weakly moderate, but is best underscored by warning a suitor against his suppositions. To press that point, the speaker of "NewPerson" asks the suitor if he believes friendship to be an "unalloy'd satisfaction" (5). That metallurgical framing of friendship suggests an unlikely but marvelous union of materials. In "New Person" those are suggested by regard for trust, fidelity and heroism, all of which the speaker offers as instances of "maya," or illusion. That difficult union in "Trickle" is troped by the wounds the speaker receives "made to free you whence you were prison'd" (4). Those wounds also attend the confessional, sacrificial sense of authorship summoned in "Whoever," for they "Stain every page, stain every song I sing, every word I say" (8). Yet, because the caution voiced in each poem is so differently troped, there is only a weak correlative resonance (.18). 68

That capacity of the trope to level thematic resonance is clearly demonstrated in the near zero correlations of *Multi* with the cautionary "Calamus" content Rossetti excluded from *Poems.* "Multi" congratulates the suitor for identifying the speaker by secret and divine signs (2), even as the poem cautions that recognition of a comrade can only proceed by such "faint indirections" (6). The obstacle in recognition catalogued by "NewPerson" is expecting a more socially scripted, idealistic relationship. Common to both poems is the speaker acknowledging the interest of another at the cost of prioritizing the Beloved above all others. Yet, because the poems so differently address courtship and even recognition by another, they bear almost no measurable relation (.03). 69

Q3: What is the relation of the "Calamus" content Rossetti sampled to "Elemental Drifts" in Rossetti's "Walt Whitman" group?

Ebb'd	PathsUntrodden	ScentedHerbage	RootsLeaves	Behold
1 — her castaways	*for all who are, or men have been, young men*	the *many passing by*	*Scents brought to men and women from the wild woods*	*a Manhattanese*
2 — hoarse and sibilant the Soul of the man I speak for	*immortal reverberations through the States*	To hear the sibyl one must nourish love.	The poet as sibyl, drawing only those who ready to hear.	
3 — seized by the spirit	*the soul of man I speak for rejoices in comrades*	*O slender leaves! O blossoms of my blood!*	The prompt to wander wild-woods	A robust kiss
4 — likenesses	*the life that exhibits itself*	*That you hide in these shifting forms of life*	Poems as roots reaching into the reader	Nonchalance dramatized in a kiss offered and returned
Average cosine	.40	.53	.55	.31

Table 6. Resonance of "Calamus" and "Ebb'd" Part 1

As I followed the resonance of "Calamus" into "Ebb'd," in Rossetti's "Walt Whitman" cluster, I selected passages from the first two sections of "Ebb'd" I thought might have counterparts in the "Calamus" content. I also shifted my analysis from looking at the thematic resonance of entire poems to passages I sensed following a rhetoric of disclosure modeled by portions of "Ebb'd" and "SP." In common for Tables 5-8, I first briefly outline the structure of those non-"Calamus" poems Rossetti selected. I then examine their counterparts to the "Calamus" excluded in *Poems* and so note that thematic continuity if I could identify it. I italicize those structural counterparts when suggested by the very language Whitman employed. In Table 5, I could find "Ebb'd" counterparts in four "Calamus" poems excluded from *Poems,* but did not find the "Ebb'd" structure of part 2 as uniformly resonant with "Calamus" content examined in Table 6. In measuring the similarity I detected, I gathered passages in the "Calamus" content I found resonant with the non-"Calamus" content. That resulted in the final row of Tables 5-8, in which I report the aggregated cosine of that multi-passage similarity for each "Calamus" poem in relation to either "Ebb'd" or "SP" passages. All passage to passage comparisons were either moderate or strong in magnitude. Those far more consistently stable statements of thematic resonance resulted from the tighter focus each demanded. While the poem to poem comparisons reported in Tables 2-4 are useful in globally examining the laud-caution tendency I find in "Calamus," the passage-driven analysis 70

of Tables 5-8 forced me to identify precisely how I found excluded “Calamus” content to be in dialogue with material in *Poems.*

71 The “castaways” in “Edd’d” trope all who wander, have wandered and will wander the beach. While Paumanok is a birth site for Whitman who hears a “fierce old mother” in the surf and embraces a father in the sand, Paumanok is more urgently an elemental site of creation. The castaways of “Edd’d” then may also be found in the young and old men whom Whitman addresses in “Paths” as much as in the “many passing by” (6) the poems Whitman tropes as scented herbage, the scents of foliage brought to those wandering the wild-wood, or the Manhattanese come with a robust kiss for the “Swarthy” speaker. The “sibilant” surf of “Ebb’d” summons the standards published and unpublished of “Paths.” In “Scented” the speaker offers sibilant utterances in those immortal reverberations through the States (25). That revealing spirit requires sympathetic magic, if not also sacrifice, in “RootsLeaves” as its speaker promises the reader that love-buds will open “If you bring the warmth of the sun to them” (9). In “Behold” the Whitman speaker performs the sibilant function by drawing to him only those worthy in their nonchalance. The spirit seizing the speaker of “Ebb’d” may also be understood, alternately, as the soul rejoicing in comrades in “Paths,” while the spirit most manifestly reveals itself in the poems of “Scented” speaker. Spirit seizure prompts a robust kiss in “Behold,” while in “RootsLeaves” it is sensed in the walkabouts of wild places. At Paumanok Whitman finds “likenesses” of himself strewn on the beach. In “Paths” those likenesses are resonant with standards exhibiting themselves as much in the drawing room as in “the margins of pond-waters.” The “Scented” speaker finds likeness itself blurring the boundaries between life and death, while Whitman’s catalogue of woodland wonders in “RootsLeaves” are likened to poems exhorting love for the reader “whoever you are” (7). Nonchalance is likened to the urge to bestow and return a kiss between comrades in “Behold.”

Ebb’d 2	PathsUntrodden	ScentedHerbage	RootsLeaves	Louisiana
1 — I know not		Writing to know, if only in retrospect	Knowledge only comes in time and practice	
2 — the dirge, the voices of men and women wreck’s	the speaker escaping *the clank of the world*	The dirge heard in recognition of death inseparably entwined with life	Men and women sufficiently dissatisfied with the conventional world to seek authenticity in the natural	
3 — merge myself	*the margins of pond-waters*	Immersion within poems both bitter and beautiful	A woodland walk	The poet as a live-oak
4 — the real Me stands yet untouch’d	*Unpublished standards*	The authentic self is that behind *the mask of materials*		
5 — have not really understood anything		That *real reality* hidden among *forms of life*		The poet disavowing the utility of his own trope
Average cosine	.33	.70	.32	.33

Table 7. Resonance of “Calamus” and “Ebb’d” Part 2 in Rossetti’s *Walt Whitman* Group[4]

72 The speaker of “Ebb’d” is less a spokesperson for Everyman than Just Another Person as seemingly strewn and randomly assembled in the detritus washed ashore. That speaker makes no qualification for his ignorance at the start of the second section. His not-knowing is that of other men and women deposited on shore by the surf mother of whom they did not ask to be born. His oppression is daring to speak sense to his condition; more so to ours: “before all my arrogant poems the real Me stands yet untouch’d, untold, altogether unreach’d” (28). That abashed humility finds counterpart in the “Scented” speaker who writes “to be perused best afterwards” as much by his readers as himself. The “RootsLeaves” speaker claims time and practice precede knowledge, for the intuited revelation of a poem is only seed material for that greater to come. The “dirge” the “Scented” speaker enjoins comes in recognition of our common end as both bitter and beautiful. In *RootsLeaves* that dirge is the dissatisfaction with the conventional world that prompts men and women to wander in wild spaces. In “Louisiana” the speaker again senses himself in another natural world wonder: a solitary live-oak “rude, unbending, lusty” (4). He, then, disavows the trope because he could not prosper as solitarily since he thinks of “little else” (9) than of friends. That unknown, authentic self of “Ebb’d” seeks the unpublished standards in “Paths.” Death hiding “in these shifting forms of life” in “Scented” does so for its own reasons beyond what the speaker can sense in other than the material world obscuring “the real reality” (33).

73 The thematic resonance above identified brings evidence for the possibility that the excluded “Calamus” content is more largely at play in *Poems* than has been previously acknowledged. However, that resonance indexed by the aggregate cosine relations of one poem to another simultaneously illustrates that the thematic resonance suggested by words’ distributional sense may and may not find complement between poems. The self-confessed ignorance in “Ebb’d” only speaks in part to the confidence of a speaker dismissing some standards but affirming others in “Paths” or proposing a trope for himself in “Louisiana” and then resolving the poem by dismissing it.

Q4: Does the excluded content show resonance with the evangel-poem “Starting from Paumanok”?

74 In the commentary below, I annotate hypertextual inquiry in responding to poem excerpts and ideas reported in Table 8. I wanted to know if “Calamus” content is resonant in the non-“Calamus” poems Rossetti assembled to represent Whitman to a UK Victorian audience. I selected “Starting from Paumanok” (“SP”) because the sequence had always provided for Whitman a prelude-like purpose: *from these origins I proceed because I was formed to do so.* The sequence also serves as a proxy for another prelude poem, the “Song of Myself” sequence Rossetti chose neither to excerpt nor include in whole. In particular, I wanted to know if the excluded “Calamus” content was resonant with the poetics presented in “SP.”

75 While I could have more exhaustively catalogued such passage to passage resonance, I opted to look at only those “SP” passages I found to be

thematically present. Accordingly, I confine my annotation to “SP7” of *Poems,* which, as reported in Table 8, is either moderately or strongly semantically resonant with the content from four “Calamus” poems Rossetti excluded. While the cosine similarity score reported refers to the entire set of words’ relationality from one passage to another, I reported the textual prompts I found thematically resonant.

In the frame of “Calamus” content, I find four components realized in “SP7:” 76

1. An orienting poetic sprung from the natural world: *I will make poems of materials*
2. Stating subject matter: *I will sing the song of companionship*
3. Consequents for that decision: *I will therefore let flame from the burning fires that were threatening to consume me*
4. Statement of commission: *And who but I should be the poet of comrades?*

SP7 component	Paths	Scented	RootsLeaves	Behold
1	In the growth by *margins* of pond-waters	Herbage, roots, leaves	*Breast-Sorrel, pinks of love, fingers*	Swarthy face, these gray eyes
2	Joy in comrades	*I write, to be perused best afterwards*	*Scents brought to men and women*	*Comes one of Manhattanese*
3	*No longer abash’d*	*I will say what I have to say by itself*		*Give a kiss in return*
4	*Manly attachment*	*Sound myself and comrades only*	*Love-buds put before you*	*American comrades land and sea*
Average cosine	.47	.82	.46	.41

Table 8. Correlations of “Starting from Paumanok, 7” and Excluded “Calamus” Content

The poems found within the excluded “Calamus” content reported in Table 7 entirely spring from natural world settings. That may be done to naturalize or license the prohibited content of the same-sex love that may be only indirectly named in *Poems.* Perhaps, too, the settings resonate with the larger Romantic sensibility of turning toward the natural world as a site of authenticity. More certain is this: “SP7” demonstrates either a high moderate or strong resonance with this group of “Calamus” poems. In all of the poems, the speaker identifies Nature as the spiritualized complement of human love. Further, each of the speakers are declaratively bold for manly love and camaraderie. Each speaker, moreover, can be identified as a moral spokesman. In “Paths” the speaker is concerned for the standard of a fostering companionship that can feed a soul. The false standards of “pleasures, profits, conformities” (4) in “Paths” have long enough stifled and choked (51) the “Scented” speaker. The common motivation of seeking companionship enfolds men and women in “RootsLeaves,” as well as “young persons wandering out in the fields when winter breaks up” (6). The “Calamus” poems become “Love-buds put before you and within you whoever you are” (7). That community united by the need for companionship fosters love in “Behold,” whose speaker returns the kiss of a Manhattanese and allows it to become “natural and nonchalant” (7). Companionship is so central of a standard in “Louisiana” that its speaker confesses that he thinks of “little else” than his “dear friends” (8-9). 77

The template or form of “Calamus” resonance I found apparent in “SP7” is the structure of resonance suggested only by that section. That suggested by “SP13” takes own on its own rhetorical pattern and within the same magnitude of resonance found in “SP7:” 78

1. A figure of democracy summoned
2. Whitman insisting that this figure sings for all
3. Poems spring from “whatever adheres and goes forward” (163)
4. “The bard of personality” (164) will declare all worthy and equal, even while unifying our perceptions of separation
5. All poems and all things reference the soul

SP13 component	PathsUntrodden	ScentedHerbage	RootsLeaves	BeholdSwarthy
1	*for all who are, or men have been, young men*	Death as the great leveler, *the real reality*		*American comrades*
2	*the Soul of the man I speak for*	*an example to lovers*		an *I* who can return a kiss *in the public room, or on the crossing of the street, or on the ship's deck*
3	*Bequeathing, hence, types of athletic love*	Herbage as poems *to be perused afterwards;* death and love are the perennial subjects of lovers	*If you become the aliment and the wet,* [roots and leaves] *will become flowers, fruits, tall branches and trees.*	Nonchalance
4			the universal *you* as object of address	The speaker's use of *we*
5	Standards offered and reformed to feed the soul	that soul aware of death ascending even to *the atmosphere of lovers*		
Average cosine	.44	.74	.47	.26

Table 9. Correlations of "Starting from Paumanok, 13" and Excluded "Calamus" Content

These poems excluded from *Poems* resonate within the rhetorical pattern of "SP13." Rather than invoke a Ma Femme figure of democracy in these poems, Whitman implies he is such a speaker. The subjects of these poems — young and old men, the men and women who go a-Maying, American comrades — number among Ma Femme's "brood beyond us and of us" [Whitman 1868, 4]. Death is the personified counterpart to Ma Femme in "Scented," or the "real reality" awaiting all behind the masks we employ to be perceived (33). However, Death is addressed rather than addresses in "Scented." Whitman's various poem-level speakers serve as proxies to Ma Femme in this group of poems. The commonality of her brood Whitman finds in our moral condition of lovers' mixed desires to increase and be relieved from passion ("Scented"), and in what should one day be a commonplace exchange of intimacy in the giving and return of a kiss. The "what goes forward" of these poems is that "athletic love" (14), the tendency of all poems to be understood best in retrospect ("Scented"), the generative imperative seen in plant life and sensed in love, and the nonchalance of all enabled to express that love ("Behold"). 79

The two rhetorical patterns discussed reveal strengths and weaknesses of the associative reading method punctuated by similarity scoring. First, any pattern is an inference that may or may not fit the sound and sense of a poem. Second, that intuitive sense of fit I came to only by the strength of semantic resonance underscored by similarity scoring. In both Whitman editions considered for the present study, "Calamus" content follows "SP." Yet, in asking after the foundational place for the "Calamus" content in Whitman's work, I had to scroll up on a monitor and turn back pages from the "Calamus" poems to examine their resonance in "SP." The structural patterns of Whitman's evangel-poem preceding even "Song of Myself" simply offer possible expressions of similar content, even while suggesting the merit of a poetic sequence. The four poems excluded from *Poems* exist in dialogue with one another, by Whitman's arrangement in the 1860 *Leaves of Grass*, as much as do the 20 components of "SP." 80

Discussion

This study refused to remain that of an almost quaintly removed drama of a self-styled, self-taught 19th century American poet trying to secure a British readership through a sympathetic critic, editor and advocate. In reviewing the similar concerns — and sticking points — for commentators removed from one another by more than 150 years, I sensed the present relevance of *Poems* as a study in authorship aided by reception and collaboration. 81

The author I sensed strode between the very different 1867 *Leaves* and *Poems* on two broad pathways. The first is his unconditional egalitarianism; the second is by daring and confessing to the hardships of loving others unrequited. That difficult love perhaps most poignantly surveyed resides in "Calamus." The love-longings Whitman knew for both his "own dear friends" [Whitman 1868, 8] and an adoring reading constituency "escaped … from the pleasures, profits, conformities,/Which too long I was offering to feed my soul" [Whitman 1868, 3–4]. He confessed this unrequited love in his career-long wooing of an audience he wished would grant him license him to speak and be read beyond his own span of days. The authorship he desired, however, had to be granted by others. 82

In his longing for acknowledgment and desire to speak authentically, Whitman keeps company with a radically different, internationally-received and yet equally idealistic Salman Rushdie reflecting on *The Satanic Verses* (1989). Despite the novelty and importance of their respective projects, each was stymied by the same narrowly moralistic reception that all but throttled authors set apart by a century. In retrospect, telling the story of the life in hiding he bore with the name Joseph Anton, Rushdie came to understand that his troubling and breakthrough novel possessed its own life story: 83

> When a book leaves its author's desk it changes. Even before anyone has read it, before eyes other than its creator's have looked upon a single phrase, it is irretrievably altered. It has become *a book that can be read,* that no longer belongs to its maker. … It will make its journey through the world and there is no longer anything the author can do about it. … The book has gone out into the world and the world has remade it [Rushdie 2012, 90].

That seeming agency of a literary creation, and certainly that of its readers, troubled Whitman from *Poems* forward. On his deathbed, Whitman eagerly awaited the fourth slimmer volume of *Leaves* that each of his editors promised would entice and prepare readers for his accretive, ever growing life work published in nine editions from 1855 to 1892. Folsom (1991) recounted how Whitman wanted to call the last sampling selected by Edmund Clarence Stedman's son, Arthur, *Leaves, Junior* in ironic resignation to a literary culture dominated by anthologies and textbooks. 84

I follow a reception-aided component of authorship into our present hypertextual age. As Rushdie found, *Satanic Verses* had become became radically separate texts for those who would silence it as heretical and for those who would defend it as an exemplar of free thought advanced in an open society. *Leaves* as a literary work cannot be understood apart from its various value-laden receptions. While it can be found in various complete editions surveying its development from 1855 to 1892, it also is partitioned in editions of "Calamus" generally faithful to the clusters Whitman oversaw. Simultaneously, "Calamus" annotates and is annotated by a group of contemporary photographers whose common subject matter is manly love [Whitman 1996]. Perhaps equally unanticipated by Whitman is the present availability of *Walt Whitman's Whisper: 36 Sex Poems* [Whitman 2017], which brings together the most explicit material from "Calamus" and "Children of Adam." Indeed, *Leaves* has tracked vistas Whitman could only distantly imagine in a future Manhattan, where only "the frequent and swift flash of eyes offering me love" could "repay" him for his candor [Whitman 2017, 6–7]. 85

I offer the terms *hypertext* and *resonance* for another age of reception in which [Greenblatt 2005, 27] observed an inadequacy of descriptives in literary criticism for a way of speaking to the intersection of art and history. Hypertext, that digital device often shaded in blue, disrupts linearity and underscores the intertextuality that Nelson (1965) identified in composition. *Resonance* approximates the relatedness of texts grouped by rhetorical function. However, the relationality I sense among poems represents but a figure of the zodiac made visible not only by the proximity of starry points in the universe of texts of assembled, but also by their dynamic gravitational interactions. Other zodiac formations are surely present. 86

Any set of corresponding passages may be indexed within the researcher's concerns by the field of associations believed to be most germane to the constitution of those passages. Because I focused on the selected Whitman that Rossetti presented to a Victorian readership, I restricted the semantic field under consideration to *Poems* and the 29 poems of "Calamus" excluded. However, if I had asked how germane was *Poems* to the assemblage of subsequent Whitman editions, then that semantic field would have been radically different, as would each of the proximal weights a term possesses in its relation to other terms. The passage to passage correspondences I report uniformly exist as but singular expressions of a semantic relatedness only within *Poem's* space. Accordingly, those statements of greater and lesser resonance can also be understood as *hyperlinks* that at once disrupt and enrich a particularly orchestrated reading experience. 87

The Whitman Archive, curiously, prompts a hypertextual sensibility because its print predecessor imprints the e-edition posted by the Center. The structural trope of book structure argues for its status as a self-contained object [Earhart 2012], however proximate are other self-contained entities of e-book editions. Despite all of its archival duty to Whitman's original print editions, the more dynamic sense of *hypertext* the reader must provide. It is the same that Whitman himself experienced in his various histories as the author of "Live Oak, with Moss," "Calamus" and the 1855 *Leaves*. 88

In tracing the evolution of the computer understood only to relieve humans of the drudgework of thinking to opening up a new sort of thinking in the humanities, McCarty (2012) proposes that the most important question before us is how we can benefit the public imagination with a focus on literature akin to employing telescopes in surveying the heavens. The justification of our work is, then, is how we can contribute to the well-being of a citizenry. Examining the rich semantic dialogue between editions produces its own meta-edition of that enriched encounter that exists outside of thinking of authors as masterminds behind particular print editions. It invites dialogue with present readers, who ultimately can test their guiding assumptions within the radically descriptive terrain of literary texts of interest. 89

Hypertext is a reader response strategy to the extent it engages with concerns greater than a single reader's experience with a text. Hypertext, in spirit, delimits and makes possible the interpretive community to which a critical interpretation appeals. However, annotating the mere presence of textual dynamics is only the precursor for making an argument for the utility of doing so. Regardless of the inherent properties deemed to be at work in a literary text, I grant that readers create readerly texts, or opportunities, to comment on those matters prompting interest after Fish (1980), who I first knew as a Miltonist aware of the various interpretive camps in dialogue with one another through the ages (1971). That reader-centered text-making I certainly employed by following the literary rationale of a poetic sequence identified within and between Whitman editions. 90

The hazard of any readerly writing of a literary text realized in interpretation is researcher's bias, or seeing what we wish to see based on the expectations of inquiry. I argue that the distributed sense attending word usage brings a necessary check to researcher's bias in its extra-human capacity to index the text created for interpretation, even if the text prompting interpretation springs from one that any reader can encounter — regardless of who reads it and for what purposes. It restores to texts their statuses as objects in the world, however much each is a puzzle to which only the individual reader can respond and however each reader responds as a member of an interpretive community. This much should ease reception of those who believe the physical text of a poem is sacrosanct [Greethan 2012]. So does the digital humanist in recognizing the plethora of texts so often available. The danger inherent to reading hypertextually is that which attends any method: insisting that the marvel I see is more urgent than those others have seen. I can write whatever *text* I wish to see in the star field of word to word associations revealed by cosines. Simultaneously, and to my credit as a reader-researcher, I must follow that associative rationale into the very theory or discourse I believe constitutes the marvels I sense. 91

The largest stake of the present study is demonstrating a method that permits literary texts to speak within their own assembled star fields of meaning without insisting that they speak only as prescribed by an interpretive community. In that charge I put my understanding of literary indirection to the test. Whitman's lauds and cautions in the "Calamus" sequence are as likely to motivate some poems as they are to exclusively define the lyricism of others. More important than those mechanics of presentation, however, is the terrain mapped by the word to word proximal semantics. Despite Rossetti excluding most of the "Calamus" sequence, its sometimes laudatory, sometimes cautious take on manly love pervades *Poems,* if only in the permissible sense of the love of comrades underlying the radical inclusion Whitman expected would be foundational to a new republic. *Poems*, then, 92

succeeded in “offering the first sample tolerably fair chance [Whitman] has had of making his way with English readers on his own showing” 13 years after Rossetti learned of the 1855 *Leaves* [Rossetti 1868, 1]. It presently succeeds in pointing toward a Whitman larger than a particular edition of his poems. Through *Poems* I find both the tireless speaker for democratic inclusion and a speaker, at times, exhausted by the indirection required to woo the Beloved.

Notes

[1] In all commentary to follow I employ the 1867 label for each poem.

[2] 1=Sing, 2=Asong, 3=Record, 4=Stranger, 5=Yearn, 6=Pen, 7=Dreamed, 8=Full; labels refer to the fully named poems reported in Table 1.

[3] Excluded “Calamus” content: 1=Paths, 2=Scented, 3=RootsLeaves, 4= NotHeat, 5=Orgies, 6=Behold, 7=Louisiana, 8=Charged, 9=Prairie, 10=Clinging, 11=Glimpse, 12=Promise, 13=Sailor, 14=Machine, 15=EastWest, 16=Leaf, 17=Eternal, 18=Shadow, 19=Silently

[4] Italicized passage represent poem quotes.

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