

Appendix 10.1
Whitman and His Manuscripts: Group Project
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Assignment Directions

In-class work day(s): xxx

Presentation day: xxx You will have about fifteen to twenty minutes to review and perfect your presentation at the beginning of this class.

All of the archived documents listed below are physically housed at the Huntington Library in Los Angeles. But, you don't have to travel there to see them, because the necessary page images are available on the Whitman Archive:

http://www.whitmanarchive.org/manuscripts/finding_aids/Huntington_CA.html

Step One: Select a Poem

In a group of *no more than four and no less than three*, please choose and "claim" one of the following seven poems. Write a shortened version of your poem's title on the board to claim it.

1. "To the Future" (1860)

Whitman Archive ID: hun.00008

<http://www.whitmanarchive.org/manuscripts/figures/hun.00008.001.jpg>

2. "To Him That Was Crucified" (1860)

Whitman Archive ID: hun.00013

<http://www.whitmanarchive.org/manuscripts/figures/hun.00013.001.jpg>

<http://www.whitmanarchive.org/manuscripts/figures/hun.00013.003.jpg>

<http://www.whitmanarchive.org/manuscripts/figures/hun.00013.005.jpg>

3. "Thoughts" (1860)

Whitman Archive ID: hun.00004

<http://www.whitmanarchive.org/manuscripts/figures/hun.00004.001.jpg>

(Note: more than one poem is listed as "Thought/s." Use ONLY this one.)

4. "Come, said my Soul" (1874)
Whitman Archive ID: hun.00021
<http://www.whitmanarchive.org/manuscripts/figures/hun.00021.001.jpg>
5. "Fancies at Navesink, the Pilot in the Mist" (actual title "Pilot in the Mist," 1885)
Whitman Archive ID: hun.00014
<http://www.whitmanarchive.org/manuscripts/figures/hun.00014.001.jpg>
6. "Soon Shall the Winter's Foil Be Here" (1888)
Whitman Archive ID: hun.00016
<http://www.whitmanarchive.org/manuscripts/figures/hun.00016.001.jpg>
7. "To My Seventieth Year" (actual title "Queries to My Seventieth Year," 1888)
Whitman Archive ID: hun.00011
<http://www.whitmanarchive.org/manuscripts/figures/hun.00011.001.jpg>

Step Two: Study the Manuscript

Read the manuscript closely. Use the Archive's handwriting tool throughout this process. Zoom in. Zoom out. Consider crossed-out words, added words, rearrangements, replacements, and anything else that you find interesting. Where does Whitman seem certain? Where does he seem uncertain? What shifts in tone, theme, message, emphasis, etc., do the changes show? What remains consistent? What does the handwriting seem to reveal—were the changes made deliberately or quickly? Do the changes seem tentative or certain? Do the changes fundamentally affect meaning? Do they seem related to other poems? It's impossible to ask too many questions at this stage.

Please start a Google Doc or a thread on the Whitman discussion forum** (name it something creative) to save your ideas as you read the manuscript(s) and published edition(s). You can reply to your own thread to add new ideas and to save what you've found. No need for formality here—phrases, links, bullets, images, etc., are fine. ANYTHING that will help you remember what you're noticing! If you use a Google Doc, please put a public link to it on the forum.

Step Three: Compare the Manuscript to at Least One Published Edition of the Poem

Consider the same questions from step two (except for the ones about handwriting). Use the Archive's search tool to find the published version(s) and do side-by-side comparisons.

As you complete steps two and three: keep an open mind. Search the Archive carefully. You never know what you might find—or NOT find. FYI: There are GOOD REASONS that some of the groups may have big questions, especially at step three! Please keep in contact with me if you have questions . . . I am happy to help you with these questions.

Step Four: Develop an Argument about the Poem

Come up with an argument about the poem based on the following factors:

- your analysis of the manuscript version(s)
- your analysis of at least one published version (likely, more than one)
- the *OED*'s definitions of key words
- your knowledge of Whitman's biography (If you're using biographical details, you need to be sure to use them precisely! You can use the biography on the Archive.)
- your knowledge of Whitman's poetry and poetics, including his poetic strategies and his use of key words, themes, etc., elsewhere in his oeuvre
- any other helpful information on the Archive—photos, criticism, contemporary reviews, encyclopedia entries, TokenX searches, etc.

Your argument must require the manuscript! In other words: if you could make the same argument about the poem without using the manuscript, then keep trying. I will circulate if you need help coming up with an idea that *relies on* the manuscript, and I can also help you phrase your idea. Your argument should clearly point out what we know about the poem only because we have access to the manuscript(s).

Step Five: Share Your Argument with Us, Informally, in Eight Minutes or Less!

You may use a simple PowerPoint presentation or other presentation software to organize your presentation, but this is not required. Students often prefer to make a quick presentation because it can be very unwieldy to switch between the manuscript and the published poem on the Archive, and slides can allow you to quickly highlight key words, show "snapshots" from the manuscript, and put the manuscript and published versions side-by-side. If you do create a PowerPoint, Prezi, or other presentation, please post it on the Whitman project discussion thread on Polylearn** so we can easily find it during presentation day.

Remember

Eight minutes max is not a long time. Focus on what you think is most cool about the manuscript, with an argument that highlights the relationship between it and the published version(s) of the poem that you found on the Archive.

**Note for readers of the collection: The discussion forum referred to above is part of my campus's Moodle system, which is called Polylearn. Previously, I used the campus Blackboard system. Any online course management system would work, as would a wiki, which I also used in a previous version of this project.