

## Walt Whitman and Expansionary Idealism

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**Most literary criticisms of *Calamus*, often read as Walt Whitman’s most obvious display of homoeroticism, bring readers to a rather shallow conclusion — the restorative, transcendental power of personal, visceral connections that bridge the gaps between human beings dwarfs any inner turmoil resulting from uncertainties of life and pretenses of society. This shoddy analysis runs a delicate acknowledgement of homosexual love though the core vein of Whitman’s work. Brian J. Rizzo, a sophomore in the Vanderbilt College of Arts and Science, argues that these readings are myopic and limit Whitman to the realm of theory, failing to acknowledge the true purpose of his writing. Rizzo continues, maintaining that Whitman dismisses society’s narrow schemas of Americanism and homosexuality, renounces the singularity of these terms, and seeks to transition from American exclusivity to American inclusivity. Embarking on a rhetorical examination and eventual redefinition of the very terms Americanism and homosexuality, Walt Whitman expands America into a society where there are multiple normalities — both of sexuality and of personhood — as modes of human existence.**

The middle of the nineteenth century saw a split in America – a war about *America* – other than that between the Union and the Confederacy. This tension, a conflict that traditionally goes necessarily *unnoticed* but that should be *unnecessary* in and of itself, is seen in Walt Whitman’s *Calamus* and most clearly in his poem “Of the Terrible Doubt of Appearances.” A haphazard reading of this poetry often leads readers to consider it an attempt to acknowledge intimate relationships and transcendental camaraderie in their abilities to make bearable the uncertainties of life, the clashes of values, and the artifices of society at large. Likewise, an elementary education of Whitman’s contradictory role as a homosexual man in nineteenth century America often leads readers to judge the poetry as a subtle attempt to antagonize an officious and heterosexualized state with an affront of sensual and homoerotic language.

Each view is narrow and lacking in imagination. Individually, they do not recognize the possibility of more nuanced readings. *Calamus* aims neither to vaguely reject artifice and nationalization nor to idealistically celebrate love and same-sex companionship, and if it does reject one and celebrate the other to any degree, it does so in the service of a more difficult endeavor. Chronological readings of the poems allow us to uncover more complex effects of Whitman’s very intentional use of ambiguous language, absence of clear punctuation, control of anaphora, and construction of free verse stanzas. Running parallel to this uncanny ambiguity is his distinct and climactic diction that forge his poetry into a masked

and political hypophora, a surreptitious question that is answered is the most obvious of ways. This theorized hypophora works to prove null a debate between the poles – between the questions of the oppressed and the questions of the oppressor, between the definition of *homosexuality* as rebellious and the definition of *America* as heterosexual. Whitman dismisses strife or a debate between *homosexuality* and *Americanism*, rejects the notion that one is pitted against the other, renounces the definitionally exclusive language where the shoddy discourse has been built, and expands the *American* ideal to include *homosexuality* as a potential norm for a mode of existence.

In *Calamus*, a collection widely but haphazardly regarded by literary critics as Whitman’s most evident celebration of extreme homoeroticism, the attempt to remove mutual exclusivity from *Americanism* and *homosexuality* is clearly raised in “Of the Terrible Doubt of Appearances.” Though it is a sixteen line poem, it can essentially be read as a poem of two trains of thought or stages of development, separated by a climax and radical shift in diction. It is because of this that the poem requires a chronological analysis. In the title and first line of the poem, “Of the Terrible Doubt of Appearances,” there seems to be a hidden and ambiguous use of language. Is Whitman meant to be read as the subject expressing a “terrible doubt of [social] appearances” and calling attention to them, or are the “appearances” meant to be interpreted as a larger, metaphorical subject expressing a “terrible doubt” of something unknown? In the first case, a more

apparent and explicit interpretation, it can be argued that Whitman, the subjugated homosexual, is attempting to tear down the oppositional power structure of that which is apparent, of that which is his objectified society. In the second case, a more obscure and implicit interpretation, it can be argued that America, the objectified society, is able and “may-be” even willing to question the oppositional power structure established by its own system of binary definitions.<sup>1</sup> In both cases, the possible legitimacy of the opposite interpretation is maintained; the very ambiguity of the title of the poem, therefore, dismisses the perceived solidarity behind *Americanism* and *homosexuality*, leaving their definitions open to new norms. That which is traditionally viewed as *American*, for example, is left open to a potential revival through the broadening of its norms to include “he” who is homosexual.

The first line of the poem, a restatement of the title, reiterates the intended ambiguity and sublime nature behind Whitman’s language. The following nine lines question the physical world – the landscape of the American continent and the history of the American context – and hypothesize that humanity is “deluded.”<sup>2</sup> Whitman’s use of anaphora works in conjunction with his free verse stanza construction within the first half of the poem, within the first train of thought, and analogously within the definition of the *American* discourse, and it creates a feeling of endlessness, a notion that neither a beginning nor an end exists in the discourse:

Of the uncertainty after all, that we may be  
deluded, / That may-be reliance and hope  
are but speculations after all, / That may-  
be identity beyond the grave is a beautiful  
fable only, / May-be the things I perceive,  
the animals, plants, men,  
hills, shining and flowing waters, / The  
skies of day and night, colors, densities,  
forms, may-be these are (as doubtless they  
are) only apparitions, and the real  
something has yet to be known<sup>3</sup>

The anaphora and free verse here is intentional and enables the appearances to be doubted and redefined. If there is no clear line, no clear distinction, no clear end to a concept or to an appearance, said concept can be easily molded in order to bring about the greatest sense of inclusion. The doubt of the appearances in the physical world must be paralleled to a doubt of the appearance, and thereby definition, of *America*. Whitman is writing in

1 Walt Whitman, “Of the Terrible Doubt of Appearances,” in *Leaves of Grass* (New York: Penguin Group, 2011.) 274-75, 9.

2 Whitman, “Of the Terrible,” 2.

3 Whitman, “Of the Terrible,” 2-5.

America. He is an American. He writes so often and so clearly of his love for his country. But he is also a sexual deviant. In order to live happily, as a free individual in a free society, he must expand the definition of those who are accepted and celebrated in America by removing the perception of deviance from sexual practices that do not fit within the traditional canon. If “the things [humans] perceive,” the inescapable norms of physical existence, are explicitly questioned, then the very words by which humans define themselves must also be questioned. A chronological analysis of the poem continues, as the climax will call for this necessary shift in diction, this unknown but essential change to and redefinition of *America*.

In a continued reading of the poem as one of two metaphorical lines, a break must appear obvious where Whitman changes course. This occurs where he claims, “To me these and the like of these are curiously answer’d by my lovers, my dear friends.”<sup>4</sup> After spending nine lines questioning all that he observes and all that surrounds his existence, Whitman definitively strips away all questionability by stating that the questions are “curiously answer’d.” How the questions are answered is made visible by the climax: “When he whom I love travels with me or sits a long while holding me by the hand.”<sup>5</sup> Not only is there an unanticipated change in topic, as evidenced by a shift from outward perceptions to intimate relationships, but there is an unanticipated use of the word “he.” Why, in America, where heterosexuality is the unstated and obvious norm, and during the nineteenth century, when the term *homosexual* had yet to be included in the dictionary or even to be printed in text, would Walt Whitman, a man, speak of love in correlation with the word “he?” The very nature of the climatic diction is, therefore, how “the uncertainty...that [humans] may be deluded” is “curiously answer’d.” This is where traditional criticism, that only a broad conceptualization of love can confirm reality, fails. It is not a broad conceptualization of love; it is an expansion of the acceptability of variance in love. It is not a confirmation of reality; it is a rejection and reorganization of reality.

If Whitman wanted to have confirmed rather than rejected the current reality or to have remained subservient to the uncertain and traditional discourse, he would have simply used the word “she.” If this were the case, the entire essence of the poem would be changed, because *American* exclusivity would go unchanged. The paradox for the *American-homosexual* would remain. So,

4 Whitman, “Of the Terrible,” 10.

5 Whitman, “Of the Terrible,” 11.

simply, Whitman rejects the debate in and of itself. He rejects and redefines the definitions of terms on which the debate is founded. But how does he do this? How does he fill in the space, expand the norms, expand *Americanism*? How does he strip away secrecy from *homosexuality*? How does he strip away deviance from *homosexuality*?

He gives give it personhood.

He lets the *homosexual* be a person in *America* – simply by acknowledging his existence. It all comes through a careful, deliberate, and terribly gutsy omission of a single letter.

As the thoughts of a same sex partner and, more broadly, those of definitional deviation are carried throughout the rest of the poem, Whitman rhetorically strengthens confidence in and indifference to the previously doubted uncertainties. He switches from the rhetorical appeal of lists to the rhetorical appeal of explanation in order to describe that he is now, under his newly enforced discourse, indifferent to said uncertainties:

When the subtle air, the impalpable, the sense that words and reason hold not, surround us and pervade us, / Then I am charged with untold and untellable wisdom, I am silent, I require nothing further, / I cannot answer the question of appearances or that of identity beyond the grave, / but I walk or sit indifferent, I am satisfied<sup>6</sup>

Through omitting any end punctuation mark to this point of the poem, Whitman upholds the inextricable nature between *Americanism* and *homosexuality*. By failing to end any thought, by creating what appears to be an endless pulsation of ideas, he rejects the notion that the answer is separated from the question, that the second line is separated from the first line, that intimate love is separated from outward perception, that *homosexuality* is separated from *Americanism*, and ultimately, that the discursive language and binary definitions of any of these ideas are set in stone.

The conception of an endless pulsation of ideas is perhaps a difficult one to grasp and one that requires careful unpacking and elaboration. If the poem, especially this first half or thought or line of dialogue, were not some endless pulsation of ideas – if punctuation were used and concepts subsequently separated – there would be clear and distinct lines of demarcation. Traditionally, this is the case. For one to be a celebrated *American*, one must be heterosexual. For one to be *homosexual*, one is definitionally deviant within said American

context. Solutions often come to assimilationist theories. This is not enough, for they maintain hierarchical rank orderings. Quite contrarily, Whitman proposes a complete reorganization of the structure through a redefinition of terms; both *heterosexuality* and *homosexuality* become equalized normalities. This is where elementary readings of Whitman continue to fail. To correct one side, to correct one line of the argument – to see in his poetry only the American flag waving in the face of the Civil War or only an unusual homoeroticism flaunting in the face of a heterosexualized society – is to keep the lines drawn and unable to meet or cross or pulsate together, to keep the *homosexual* to the side as the one who is not celebrated at the *American* picnic of brotherhood.

The piece is just as much political as it is poetic; it constitutes a hypophora, a rhetorical question that he blatantly answers. The endless perceptions of reality in the first metaphorical line of the poem position this metaphorical question:

May-be seeming to me what they are (as doubtless they indeed but seem) as from my present point of view, and might prove (as of course they would) nought of what they appear, or nought anyhow, from entirely changed points of view<sup>7</sup>

In other words, the “present point of view” that he who is American must be heterosexual in order to solidify his *American* identity requires “changed points of view” that see those who are *American* as able to be either heterosexual or homosexual. Whitman is attempting political movement through literary efforts, and he does it by expanding definitions. It is he – the inclusion, most importantly, of “he” – who provides a “curious answer” to the rhetorical question of political necessity. It is this change, this answer, this inclusion, this broadening of definition that ultimately allows Whitman to be “satisfied” in the *American* ideal.<sup>8</sup>

It is of vital importance that we do two things at this time. We must survey *Calamus* for other poems that will adjoin the expansion of the *American* ideal, and we must clearly define the terms “homosexual” and “heterosexual,” both in our own time and in the time of the nineteenth century. To begin, Whitman was dead before either term was really used; the terms “heterosexual” and “homosexual” were first printed in the United States in May of 1892, two months after Whitman died.<sup>9</sup> They were used in James Kiernan’s English

7 Whitman, “Of the Terrible,” 9.

8 Whitman, “Of the Terrible,” 16.

9 Jonathan Ned Katz, *The Invention of Heterosexuality* (New York: Dutton, 1995), 20.

6 Whitman, “Of the Terrible,” 12-15.

translation of *Psychopathia Sexualis*, a work produced by Richard von Krafft-Ebing of the University of Vienna in 1886. In *Psychopathia Sexualis*, homosexuality is defined: “The essential feature of this strange manifestation of the sexual life is the want of sexual sensibility of the opposite sex, even to the extent of horror, while sexual inclination and impulse toward the same sex are present.”<sup>10</sup>

Homosexuals, therefore, were defined as those who did not fit within traditional masculinity or femininity and as those who deviated from procreative norms. The concept of heterosexuality was also described in this work. This is very important, for it shows both the progressiveness and the universalism of the inclusion of the word “he” in “Of the Terrible Doubt of Appearances.” It is progressive in the sense that it is revolutionary and before its time. It is universal because *homosexuality* was a foreign concept; by including the word “he,” Whitman expands *sexuality*, an active expression of love rather than a passive expression of gender, in *America*.

In 1856, three decades before the publication of *Psychopathia Sexualis*, Henry David Thoreau, one of the most celebrated American transcendentalists and philosophers in all of history, wrote a letter to Harrison Blake, a Unitarian minister in Worcester, Massachusetts. In it, Thoreau sheds valuable insight into the nature of Whitman’s engagement with the same sex:

He does not celebrate love at all. It is as if the breasts spoke. I think that men have not been ashamed of themselves without reason. No doubt, there have always been dens where such deeds were unblushingly recited...But even on this side, he has spoken more truth than any American or modern that I know. I have found this poem exhilarating encouraging. As for its sensuality, – & it may turn out to be less sensual than it appeared – I do not so much wish that those parts were not written, as that men & women were so pure that they could read them without harm, that is, without understanding them...if we are shocked, whose experience is it that we are reminded of?<sup>11</sup>

Thoreau poses an interesting rhetorical question that parallels the hypophora in “Of the Terrible Doubt of Appearances.” In a purposeful and careful examination

10 Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, trans. Franklin S. Klaf (New York: Stein and Day, 1965), 221.

11 Henry David Thoreau, *The Correspondence of Henry David Thoreau*, ed. Walter Harding and Carl Bode. (Washington Square: New York University Press, 1958), 444.

of a selection of other poems in *Calamus*, we will gain greater perspective on Whitman’s treatment of the word “he,” enabling us to answer the question posed by Thoreau. We will discover that the question is answered in various poems with nearly the same intentions and strategies.

Whitman begins *Calamus* with a poem appropriately titled “In Paths Untrodden.” It is a symbolic move, for it is on “paths untrodden” that he escapes “from the life that exhibits itself, / From the standards hitherto publish’d, from...conformities.”<sup>12</sup> He continues in an advocacy of an escape from the current tradition and, to use language from “Of the Terrible Doubt of Appearances,” from the “present point of view.”<sup>13</sup> In a classic move of transcendentalism, he implies that this occurs when one returns to nature. The implication can be read either literally or metaphorically, and both readings have flaws. Literally, it is fairly impossible to exist as one in nature for a prolonged period of time. Even if it were to simply be for a day, the argument that the *one* is more vital than the *whole* in the persuasion of a new definition of terms is simply absurd. From the moment of birth, humans need other humans to survive, let alone obtain knowledge. Metaphorically, it is fairly impossible to unlearn what has been learned. It is also a ludicrous reading to make, because Whitman wants real changes to the physical world, not just imagined ones. It is not, therefore, the process of unlearning what has been learned that Whitman champions. It is the process of examining what has been learned in order to change what is taught.

As described at length, Whitman takes Ockham’s razor to the theorized war between a heteronormative *America* and a more inclusive *America*, and he does it most strictly by a slashing of the terms traditionally used to describe the sides that wage said war. Once this is done, once we examine the learning of these faulty terms – and here lies the importance of it all – we are able to teach the terms to future generations with greater subtlety and greater accuracy, allowing for the evolution and progress of humankind, allowing for humankind to achieve *our* greatest potential as a species that coexists and coincides.

There are three poems in *Calamus* that can be read as direct arguments for why the physical reality in “Of the Terrible Doubt of Appearances” should be interpreted as representative of *America* and why it should be made more broad, more inclusive of new norms. In “The Prairie-Grass Dividing,” Whitman explicitly calls

12 Walt Whitman, “In Paths Untrodden,” in *Leaves of Grass* (New York: Penguin Group, 2011.) 268, 1-4.

13 Whitman, “Of the Terrible,” 9.

for people “of inland America” to experience a “spiritual corresponding,” a “copious and close companionship of men.”<sup>14</sup> In “A Promise to California,” he explains his intentions to bring the expansion of *America* to all parts of America: “Sojourning east a while longer, soon I travel toward you, to remain, to teach robust American love, / For I know very well that I and robust love belong among you.”<sup>15</sup> It is necessary to note his desire to “teach robust American love,” to “teach” the broadening of the *American* definition to be made more “robust,” to be made more inclusive. This supplements his practical intentions, his pragmatic call that is necessary for the progress of humankind. In “To the East and to the West,” he continues to support the same exact message: “I believe the main purport of these States is to found a superb friendship, exaltè, previously unknown, / Because I perceive what waits, and has been always waiting, latent in all men.”<sup>16</sup> I do not mean to overload direct quotation here with the absence of close analysis, nor do I mean to imply that I have no analysis thereof. Whitman’s words stand alone as self explanatory; the desire for *Americanism* and *homosexuality* to be expanded, for one to inform the other, is one that he explicitly intends to be made real for the American continent and one that he explicitly carries throughout it.

D.H. Lawrence, whose own works also contain an overarching theme that runs against the influences of modernity and who wrote many literary criticisms, offers what may be nice support of this argument. It is essential to note that my own interpretation of Whitman’s effects of love does not run parallel to that of Lawrence, but I feel it is necessary to include Lawrence’s acknowledgement of the nuanced yet revolutionary attempts made in *Calamus*:

[Whitman] hesitates: he is reluctant, wistful. But none the less he goes on. And he tells the mystery of manly love, the love of comrades. Continually he tells us the same truth: the new world will be built upon the love of comrades, the new great dynamic of life will be manly love. Out of this inspiration the creation of the future.<sup>17</sup>

Lawrence offers a less progressive reading than I do, but

14 Walt Whitman, “The Prairie-Grass Dividing,” in *Leaves of Grass* (New York: Penguin Group, 2011.) 281, 2-10.

15 Walt Whitman, “A Promise to California,” in *Leaves of Grass* (New York: Penguin Group, 2011.) 282, 3-4.

16 Walt Whitman, “To the East and to the West,” in *Leaves of Grass* (New York: Penguin Group, 2011.) 285, 5-6.

17 D.H. Lawrence, “Whitman,” in *Leave of Grass and Other Writings* (New York: Norton & Company, 2002), 828.

he steps in the same direction. The future will be different. The nature of love will be reevaluated. It is not, however, simply the future that will be made different. It is the nature of the *American* ideal that will be made different. It is not simply a reevaluation of love that will occur. It is an expansion, an inclusion of more types of love that will occur.

This is not a hopeless endeavor. Whitman theorizes a strange encounter with someone or something in “To a Stranger.” Oddly and necessarily enough, the “stranger” is not a person, and the “you” he describes is not a physical body, *per se*.<sup>18</sup> It constitutes that which is currently unknown, that which is able to be the future, that which is the redefinition and redrawing of the *American* image:

You must be he I was seeking, or she I was seeking...You grew up with me, were a boy with me or a girl with me...I am not to speak to you, I am to think of you when I sit alone or wake at night alone, / I am to wait, I do not doubt I am to meet you again, / I am to see to it that I do not lose you.<sup>19</sup>

Whitman waits in dark times, “at night alone,” waiting, wishing, hoping that the night will pass and a day will come when the “he” and the “she” and the “you” are not unspoken. It is interesting and obviously necessary that he uses these terms to refer to the expansion of the definition of *sexuality* in America. Perhaps it is even more interesting, though it may be expected by this point, that in the discussion of a sensuously yearned after stranger, the label “she” comes after that of “he,” though it is vital to remember that the “he” and that the “she” and that the “you” refer to an idealized representation of *American* inclusiveness rather than to any particular being. He champions this potential inclusiveness, this day that he is able “to speak to you.” This becomes evident in “I Dream’d a Dream:”

I dream’d in a dream when I saw a city invincible to the attacks of the whole of the rest of the earth, / I dream’d that was the new city of Friends, / Nothing was greater there than the quality of robust love, it led the rest, / It was seen every hour in the actions of the men of that city, / And in all their looks and words.<sup>20</sup>

There lies the solution – in a redefinition of concepts, in

18 Walt Whitman, “To a Stranger,” in *Leaves of Grass* (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 280, 1-3.

19 Whitman, “To a Stranger,” 2-10.

20 Walt Whitman, “I Dream’d a Dream,” in *Leaves of Grass* (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 284, 1-5.

a new teaching of “words.” His language is not terribly sexual. It is not erotic. It does not throw homosexuality in the face of *America* or pathetically and resentfully try to stick it to the man. Rather, there is a very acute theory in happiness and epistemology happening here. Whitman examines what he knows and what he perceives to be wisdom. He concludes that *America* has failed in this regard, and he argues vehemently for his dream of mutual inclusiveness between the concepts of *Americanism* and *homosexuality* to be realized.

Many critics argue that Whitman is not making any clear calls about *homosexuality*. Well, he certainly could not. The word had yet to exist. As Thoreau earlier wrote, “He does not celebrate love at all. It is as if the breasts spoke.”<sup>21</sup> This is the long-running argument, that Whitman transcends physical reality and speaks of love as if it were an unusual, amorphous creature, as if the *one* became *all* and *all* became the *one*. Not only is this reading impractical and in the possession of no tangible effects, but it is made within the *American* context that Whitman rejects, within an *American* discourse where *homosexuality* is invisible. Whitman had numerous relationships with men and boys; in the most realistic and physical sense, why would he want that to be an unacceptable practice in the country he calls his own?

This analysis, as unorthodox as it may be, ultimately circles back to my initially questioned ambiguity of Whitman’s language. The title and first line of the poem I have most thoroughly analyzed, “Of the Terrible Doubt of Appearances,” is a perfect example. What seems so dark, heavy, and “terrible,” is oddly contrasted by a concluding sense of satisfaction: “He ahold of my hand has completely satisfied me.”<sup>22</sup> Has satisfaction, an obvious triumph in emotionalism over dissatisfaction, been created by a lover, or should it be read as the forgery of questioning and realization? More basically, why is the poem even titled, “Of the Terrible Doubt of Appearances?”

It is not merely a doubt of appearances. It is a rejection of appearances and, more specifically, a rejection of the appearances of definitions – of the belief that *Americanism* implies heterosexuality and that *homosexuality* implies treason. Whitman fights the appearances by more than explicitly doubting them. The language he employs uncovers the operations behind traditional discourse; it exposes how the American ideology has defined and subjected homosexuality and how homosexuality, however socially invisible of

a concept in his time, has defined and objectified the American ideology. The notion, therefore, that one is pitted against the other, that the two are at warring odds, is doubted and rejected, not on the grounds of the historical context or discourse, but on the grounds of the thoughts used within the context, of the definitions used within the discourse.

John Addington Symonds, an English literary critic and poet, published an account of Whitman in 1893, the year of his own death and a year after the death of Whitman. Twenty years earlier, he wrote to Whitman concerning the nature of the relationships between males in *Calamus*.<sup>23</sup> Whitman refused to answer. In 1890, nearly two decades after Symonds tried to elicit a response, Whitman offered Horace Traubel, a biographer of the poet’s later years, an ambiguous explanation:

[Symonds] has a few doubts yet to be quieted – not doubts of me, doubts rather of himself. One of these doubts is about *Calamus*. What does *Calamus* mean? What do the poems come to in their round-up?<sup>24</sup>

Whitman does not answer these questions in explicit terms. They are left open to our own readings and interpretations. It is true: *Calamus* can be read as the theoretical, as the broad conceptualization of love in a transcendental project. But is this not a last-ditch attempt to hold to the *America* that Whitman rejects? Is it not a pathetic attempt to constrain *homosexuality* within the framework that Whitman rejects?

The *American* and *homosexual* identities are, in social construction, both similar and oppositional. They are both aggregate identities with barriers that conflict, but the state of their opposition has more to do with how they are socially defined than how they actually – or potentially could – exist. The contradictory interests concerning *Americanism* and *homosexuality* come only if their definitions are acutely opposed so that one must be lowered to heighten the other. *Calamus* and “Of the Terrible Doubt of Appearances” represent poetry in which the natures of *Americanism* and of *homosexuality* are essentially redefined, allowing Walt Whitman to synthesize a more happy and more fulfilling and more worthwhile experience of life for people – like himself – who sway between the two. With the stroke a pen, Whitman redefines and resolves two wars – one fought in a brutal gore of the physical reality, one waged in a definitional exclusivity of the rhetorical realm – as those

21 Thoreau, *The Correspondence of*, 444.

22 Whitman, “Of the Terrible,” 16.

23 David S. Reynolds, *Walt Whitman’s America: A Cultural Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 1995). 521.

24 Reynolds, *Walt*, 527.

of the ultimate *unnecessary*.

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