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The European Responses to Whitman's Aesthetics

Convenor: Dr Marc Bellot (University of Amiens)

Email: mbellot@aol.com

Co-convenor: Dr Viorica Patea (University of Salamanca)

Email: vioricap@usal.es

Singer of a new world and of a new man, Walt Whitman articulates the European revolutionary aspirations of the Enlightenment and lays the foundation of the poetic idiom of the 20th century. This seminar will examine how Whitman's poetry has been absorbed into European cultures and to what extent American culture, as articulated in his work, has redefined the traditions of the old world. The way the Europeans have reconstructed Whitman's writings in order to make them fit their own poetic needs, and the diverging aesthetics these responses have generated, will foster a better understanding of the Whitmanian impact on Europe.